BBC

**TCHAIKOVSKY PIANO CONCERTO**
What are the best recordings of this once-rejected masterpiece?

**GIDON KREMER**
We meet the legendary violinist

# music

The world's best-selling classical music magazine

# The Proms start here!

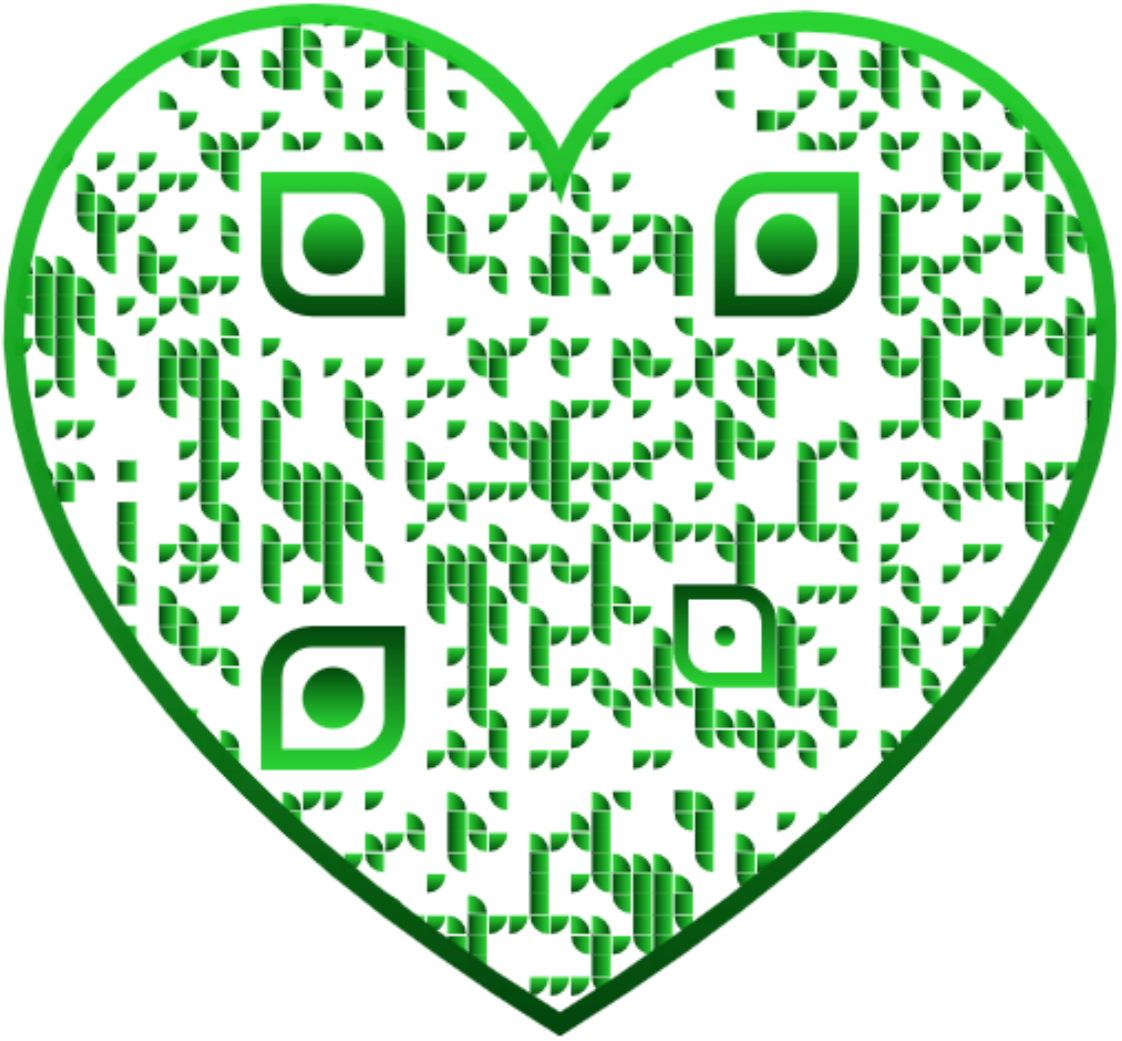
Join us for a celebration of the world's greatest music festival

## 100 Great BBC Proms

The finest performances, some famous firsts... and the moments to forget

**PLUS! COMPLETE PROMS LISTINGS**

*see p36 for full details*



WARNER CLASSICS
ERATO

FAREWELLS
JAKUB JÓZEF ORLIŃSKI
MICHAŁ BIEL

With Farewells, Warsaw-born countertenor Jakub Józef Orliński, partnered by pianist Michał Biel, offers a panorama of Polish song that spans 150 often turbulent years. Taking its title from a triptych of songs written in 1948 by Henryk Czyż, the album is often nostalgic in spirit as poetry and music evoke emotions, nature, landscapes and traditions.

OUT NOW
SCAN THE QR CODE TO ORDER!

A MONUMENT FOR BEETHOVEN
YOAV LEVANON

For his debut on Warner Classics, the 18-year-old pianist Yoav Levanon has chosen a demanding programme of works by Liszt, Chopin, Mendelssohn and Schumann. Entitled A Monument for Beethoven, his album honours the contribution made by those four composers – especially Liszt – when the city of Bonn staged festivities in 1845 to mark the 75th anniversary of Beethoven's birth.

OUT NOW
SCAN THE QR CODE TO ORDER!

warnerclassics.com | amazon.co.uk | prestomusic | Listen on Apple Music | Spotify

## EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES

Tel: +44 (0)117 300 8752
Email: music@classical-music.com
Post: The editor, BBC Music Magazine, Eagle House, Bristol BS1 4ST

## SUBSCRIPTIONS & BACK ISSUES

Tel: 03330 162 118
Web: buysubscriptions.com/contactus
Post: BBC Music Magazine, PO Box 3320, 3 Queensbridge, Northampton


Follow us on Twitter
@musicmagazine

Like us on Facebook
facebook.com/classicalmagazine

Find us online
classical-music.com

Subscribe to our podcast


Subscribe today to *BBC Music Magazine*

Save money on newsstand prices!

*See p10 for our fantastic offer*

# Welcome

After far too many months of grey, sodden winter, the summer festival season is finally upon us, and with it the return of the BBC Proms. Following two years of Covid-induced restrictions, the full-length schedule returns with a bang in 2022 to capacity audiences, top-tier visiting ensembles and soloists, and large-scale performances of major works such as Verdi's Requiem and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

Alongside anniversaries for Vaughan Williams, George Walker and Iannis Xenakis, the Proms this year celebrates the centenary of the BBC with a special Public Service Broadcasting Prom on 30 August. On page 26, Jeremy Pound marks the occasion with a look at 100 standout Proms that have taken place since the BBC forged its association with the world's leading classical music festival in 1927. From the first televised Prom in 1947, to the first female-conducted Prom in 1984, to a muted Last Night in September 2001, to concerts played to an empty Royal Albert Hall in 2020, it's evident how accurately the festival has served as a reflection of social and political events throughout the years.

The 2022 season is no different, with its greater emphasis on diversity and gender balance and its determination to broaden the festival's reach to regional city centres. For full listings and highlights turn to page 36.

**Charlotte Smith** *Editor*

## THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS

### Rachel Rowntree
*Violinist and writer*

'Talking to Llinos Owen about combining her playing and sporting activities was hugely inspiring. Few people could go through such trauma and come through it with not one, but two glittering careers!' ***Page 48***

### Elizabeth de Brito
*Podcast founder and presenter*

'I've long been familiar with George Walker's music, but delving deeply into his work has given me an almost reverential appreciation of this great composer. What a thrill to write about this genius of precision.' ***Page 60***

### Claire Jackson
*Writer and editor*

'Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto has it all: dazzling virtuosity, tender introspection – and a dramatic backstory. It's a work I never tire of, which is lucky, as there is a thicket of recordings to explore.' ***Page 64***

Visit **Classical-Music.com** for the very latest from the music world

# Contents

JULY 2022

July Radio 3 and TV listings *See p100*

26 Malcolm Sargent, a BBC Proms legend

## FEATURES


26 **Cover:** 100 Notable BBC Proms
We celebrate the new Proms season and the BBC's centenary with a look at their stand-out moments together, from stunning symphonies to stirring speeches

36 Your BBC Proms guide
Complete details of the 2022 season, concert by concert

44 Theory of relativity
The sound made by string players has evolved over the years, says *Ariane Todes*, but has it been for the best?

48 Making a splash
Bassoonist Llinos Owen tells *Rachel Rowntree* how she overcame major injury to become an elite paracanoeist

52 British music museums
*Andrew Green* takes us on a tour around the UK


## EVERY MONTH


8 Letters

12 The Full Score

25 Richard Morrison
Why the CBSO is leading the way in education

40 The BBC Music Magazine Interview
Violinist Gidon Kremer talks to *Charlotte Smith*

58 Musical Destinations
*Paul Riley* enjoys the pleasures of Paxton House

60 Composer of the Month
*Elizabeth de Brito* salutes George Walker, a composer who overcame prejudice to forge an exceptional career

64 Building a Library
*Claire Jackson* on the best recordings of Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1; plus, five works to explore next

100 Radio & TV listings

104 Crossword and Quiz

106 Music that Changed Me
Composer and broadcaster Neil Brand


COVER: MATT HERRING THIS PAGE: GETTY, TOMMY GA-KEN WONG


BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

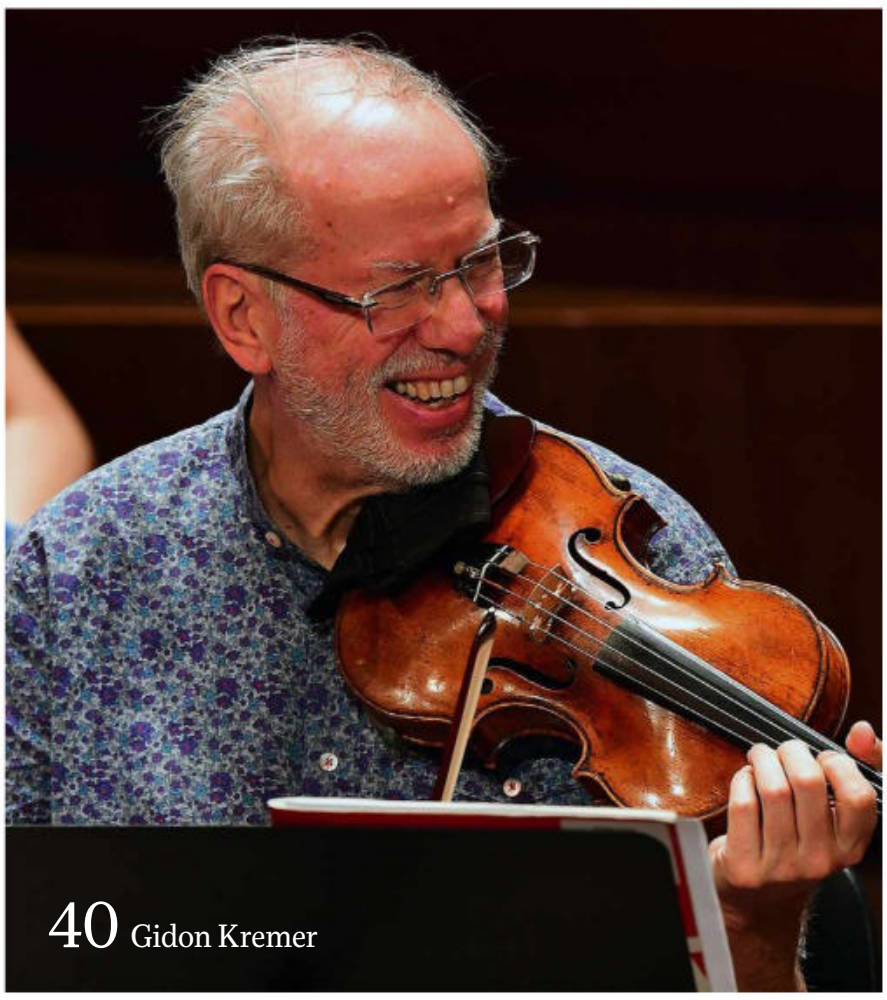
Subscriptions £64.87 (UK); £65 (Europe); £74 (Rest of World) ABC Reg No. 3122

EDITORIAL
*Plus our most memorable Prom moment*
**Editor** Charlotte Smith
*Andrew Davis conducts Vaughan Williams's Fifth Symphony: 26 July 2007*
**Deputy editor** Jeremy Pound
*Tadaaki Otaka conducts Respighi's The Pines of Rome: 6 August 2004*
**Reviews editor** Michael Beek
*John Wilson's Celebration of Classic MGM Film Musicals: 1 August 2009*
**Cover CD editor** Alice Pearson
*Andrew Manze conducts Vaughan Williams Symphonies Nos 4, 5 & 6: 16 August 2012*

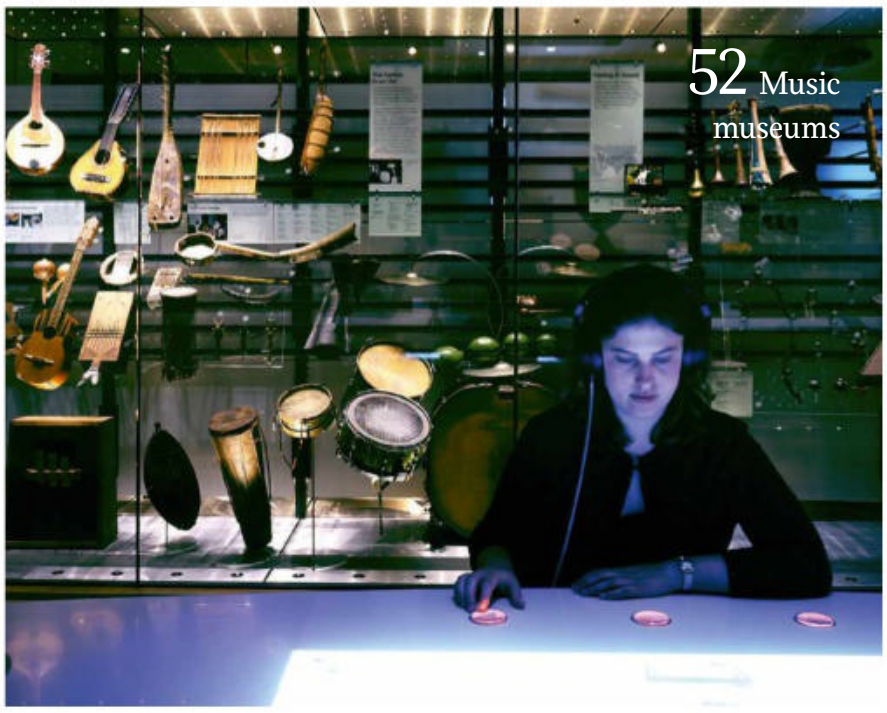
**Art editor** Dav Ludford
**Picture editor** Sarah Kennett
**Senior digital editor** Debbie Graham
**Listings editor** Paul Riley
**Thanks to**
Daniel Jaffé, Jenny Price, Rebecca Franks, Amelia Parker, Hannah Nepilova

MARKETING
**Subscriptions director**
Jacky Perales-Morris
**Direct marketing manager** Kellie Lane
**Senior direct marketing executive**
Joe Jones

ADVERTISING
**Advertising sales director**
Mark Reen +44 (0)117 300 8810
**Group advertisement manager**
Laura Jones +44 (0)117 300 8509
**Business development manager**
Katie Gibbons +44 (0)117 300 8812



40 Gidon Kremer



52 Music museums

# July reviews

Your guide to the best new recordings and books

Iestyn Davies, Sophie Bevan and Lucy Crowe record Handel's *La Resurrezione*

## 68 Recording of the Month

**Handel**
La Resurrezione

'Harry Bicket and his stellar cast embrace Handel's radical approach, turning sacred figures into intensely dramatic ones'

70 Orchestral 74 Concerto 78 Opera
80 Choral & Song 84 Chamber 88 Instrumental
90 World 92 Brief Notes 94 Books
95 Audio 96 Jazz 97 Reviews Index

**Senior account manager**
Rebecca Yirrell +44 (0)117 300 8811
**Partnership manager**
Rebecca O'Connell +44 (0)117 300 8814
**Brand sales executives**
Victoria Pointer +44 (0)117 300 8102
Jenny Allan +44 (0)117 300 8546
**Inserts**
Laurence Robertson +353 876 902208
SYNDICATION & LICENSING
Tim Hudson +44 (0)20 7150 5170
Richard Bentley +44 (0)20 7150 5168
PRODUCTION
**Production director** Sarah Powell
**Production coordinator** Katty Skardon
**Ad coordinator** Beth Phillips
**Ad designer** Parvin Sepehr
**Reprographics** Tony Hunt, Chris Sutch
PUBLISHING
**Managing director** Andrew Davies
**CEO** Tom Bureau
**Group managing director**
Andy Marshall
BBC STUDIOS, UK PUBLISHING
**Chair, editorial review boards**
Nicholas Brett
**Managing director, consumer products and licensing**
Stephen Davies
**Director, magazines and consumer products** Mandy Thwaites
**Compliance manager** Cameron McEwan
**UK publishing co-ordinator**
Eva Abramik
EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD
Jack Furness, Edward Blakeman, Chi-chi Nwanoku, Adam Barker, Philip Raperport

This magazine is published by Our Media Company Bristol Limited under licence from BBC Studios

Subscribe today to BBC Music Magazine
Save money on newsstand prices!
*See p10 for our fantastic offer*

# Have your say...

Write to: The editor, BBC Music Magazine, Eagle House, Bristol, BS1 4ST
Email: music@classical-music.com Social media: contact us on Facebook and Twitter

Well orchestrated: Wellington defeats the French at Vitoria

## Victorious adaptations

I enjoyed Andrew Green's investigation of the origin and rise of our National Anthem (June issue). While I admire Beethoven's *Seven Variations on 'God Save the King'* which he mentions, in my view a far better and more dramatic use of it is in the second part of his battle symphony, *Wellington's Victory* (or the *Battle of Vitoria*) Op. 91. This theatrical orchestral showpiece predates Tchaikovsky's ubiquitous *1812* Overture, but like it celebrates the defeat of Napoleonic forces with cannon and musket effects. It starts with two marching bands: one English, playing part of *Rule Britannia*; the other French, bizarrely to our ears playing a rendition of what in England is the tune to 'For He's a Jolly Good Fellow'. The second part is a Victory Symphony featuring variations on 'God Save the King', including a powerful fugal passage. It's highly recommended for any musical pageant in tribute to the Platinum Jubilee!
***Peter Nicholson,*** *Newmarket*

**WIN! £50 VOUCHER FOR PRESTO MUSIC**

Every month we will award the best letter with a **£50 voucher** for **Presto Music**, the UK's leading e-commerce site for classical and jazz recordings, printed music, music books and musical instruments. Please note: the editor reserves the right to shorten letters for publication.

prestomusic

GETTY

## Unlikely allies

The adoption of the tune to 'God Save the King' by other nations [see *Letter of the Month*, left] had one rather amusing consequence. Just after the declaration of World War I, the Austrian composer and conductor Felix Weingartner wrote a patriotic overture in which the French and Russian anthems were satirised, while the Austrian and German anthems were grandly presented. Unfortunately, his choice for Germany was 'God Save the King' – seemingly he was unaware that this was the British National Anthem. As a result, one would get the impression that Britain and Austria were on the same side!
***Roger Musson,*** *Edinburgh*

## Tackling Harry

Your obituary on Harrison Birtwistle (June) recalls a meeting I had with him in 1952. While on holiday in Blackpool with my parents as a boy of 13, I went onto the beach to kick a ball about. I was soon engaged in conversation with this lad of 18 and we had an enjoyable game of football together. I asked this lad his name and what he did for a living. He replied 'Harrison Birtwistle' and that he was a composer. At the time this meant nothing to me but his name stuck in my mind. Of course, it was only a few years later that I came to realise the significance of my meeting with the great man. He was a better composer than a footballer.
***Stan Abrahams,*** *Ditchling,*

## All in the head

I have just read Tom Service's piece entitled 'Memory Games' (June) and it brought to mind a chamber concert in Haslemere in 2006, featuring a piano recital by the blind French pianist Bernard d'Ascoli. During the recital, as Bernard was playing a Mozart piano sonata, he had to stop playing during the work as he couldn't remember what came next. So, he apologised and restarted the sonata all over again. This time, no memory lapse. Being blind, he has to play his complete repertoire from memory.
***Roger Saunders,*** *Grayshott*

## Melodious words

Tom Service's column in the May issue, 'Why write about music?', was especially opportune, as I have just completed a wonderful novel, *The Magician* by Colm Tóibín, about the life of Thomas Mann and his family. Near the end of the book, the string quartet in which Mann's son plays viola performs Beethoven's Opus 132 Quartet in the new family home in the US following relocation from Europe during the Second World War. The impact of the listening experience and the relationship between the players themselves and their engagement with the audience

are evoked brilliantly.
***John Shields,*** *Wilmslow*

## Nielsen and no more

When is an encore unwelcome (*Letters*, May)? Recently, I listened to a thrilling live performance of Nielsen's Fourth Symphony from the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Jukka-Pekka Saraste. Hardly had the triumphant final notes concluded and the first wave of applause subsided when the orchestra played an encore of Silvestrov's Elegy for Strings. It just killed the mood. No disrespect to Silvestrov – it's a fine piece – but I would have preferred to hear it before the Nielsen, not after. I wanted to leave the concert in a state of exultation, with Nielsen's glorious final affirmation of the inextinguishable human spirit blazing in my ears, eventually triumphing over the massed forces of chaos and tumult arrayed against it. Goodness knows, it's a message the world needs more than ever right now.
***Neil Sinyard,*** *Saxby All Saints*

## Family appreciation

Thanks to Julian Haylock for the very well written and concise yet thorough summary of my father's musical career recently published (February issue) in *BBC Music Magazine*.
***Jay Heifetz,*** *via email*

## Late genius

I greatly enjoyed your Vaughan Williams anniversary special (May) and have loved his music for almost 50 years now since encountering the epic Sixth Symphony as a teenager (the LPO conducted by Adrian Boult on a Decca Eclipse LP, including VW's short speech). I largely agree with Stephen Johnson's choice of ten masterpieces but would substitute the beautiful, poetic and largely unknown *Epithalamion* (1957) from the end of Vaughan Williams's life for the *Serenade to Music*, which has never appealed to me.
***Jeffrey Davis,*** *Rotherfield*

**The editor replies:**
Hopefully, this month's cover CD may help to change your opinion of the *Serenade*! Fingers crossed...

## Fabulous Florence

I am a subscriber to *BBC Music Magazine* and congratulate you for your comprehensive international music festivals guide (May), although might I query one apparent omission from this list: Florence's Maggio Musicale Fiorentino 2022. I'm a retired music teacher and spent the first year of my post-graduate compositional masters on a college scholarship there where the festival was always proud of its breadth and international appeal. I would be surprised if this year's event were any different.
***David Hart,*** *Perranporth*

**The editor replies:**
Though we can't fit in every festival, we have duly made a note for next year's guide.

## Dalia on disc?

I don't suppose there is any chance that the performance of Sibelius's Symphony No. 2 as performed by the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Dalia Stasevska on the First Night of the Proms 2021 will be released as a CD? It was a phenomenal performance, totally different to any I have heard, and left the conductor in tears at the end. I know it is currently available on iPlayer, but for how long? I hope someone considers my request.
***Jurek Rzepecki,*** *via email*


NEW ALBUM - OUT NOW
MATANGI
OUTCAST
AN ODE TO MUSICAL TROUBLEMAKERS & OUTSIDERS
STRING QUARTETS
SCHNITTKE 3
SILVESTROV 1
SHOSTAKOVICH 8
GRAMOPHONE EDITORS CHOICE

"A GENUINELY REMARKABLE DISC"
IVAN MOODY
(GRAMOPHONE)

MORE INFO:
MATANGI.NL/OUTCASTUK

BBC music MAGAZINE

# FREE ONE MONTH TRIAL
## to the digital edition

Available from

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google play

amazon apps

Available on kindle fire

*BBC Music Magazine* is a must-read for anyone with a passion for classical music. Every issue brings the world of classical music to life, from interviews with the greatest artists and features on fascinating subjects, to all the latest news and opinions from around the music world.

## *Have BBC Music Magazine delivered straight to your device*

**when you take out a one month FREE trial* subscription to the digital edition. Simply return to the home page to subscribe.**

*After your one month trial your subscription will continue at £2.99 per month

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google play

amazon apps Available on kindle fire

BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

# The*full*score

Our pick of the month's news, views and interviews

## The BBC Music Magazine Awards 2022

We present photos from this year's sparkling ceremony at Kings Place in London

Time to shine: (above) Personality of the Year winner Nicky Spence gives a fabulous performance of Richard Strauss's *Zueignung* followed by a brilliantly funny rendition of *Valentine Card* by Jeremy Nicholas, accompanied on the piano by his husband Dylan Perez; (right) catching up at the reception; (left) ceremony co-presenter Tom Service with guest presenter and double bassist Leon Bosch

A night to remember: (clockwise from above) husband-and-wife Premiere winners Elena Urioste and Tom Poster perform Sondheim's *Send in the Clowns*; former *Strictly* judge Bruno Tonioli; Sony Classical president Per Hauber on stage with Tom Service and editor Charlotte Smith; Poster and Urioste with Chineke! bassoonist Linton Stephens; Radio 3's Georgia Mann; fellow presenter Petroc Trelawny with Orchestral Award winner, conductor John Wilson

JOHN MILLAR

## Rising Stars

### Three to look out for...

**Isha Crichlow** *Clarinettist*

**Born:** London, UK
**Career highlight:** Playing alongside the London Philharmonic Orchestra as part of its Foyle Future Firsts development scheme. It has really cemented my love of orchestral collaboration and performance.
**Musical heroes:** I've been a keen birdwatcher for even longer than I've played the clarinet, and I've always loved the way Messiaen weaves birdsong into his music. I particularly love his *Catalogue d'oiseaux*, a musical 'field guide' complete with his written descriptions of the birds' unique personalities.
**Dream concert:** I'd love to perform somewhere totally wild – in the middle of a forest or on a clifftop – where the sounds of nature provide relief from the awkward silences between movements!

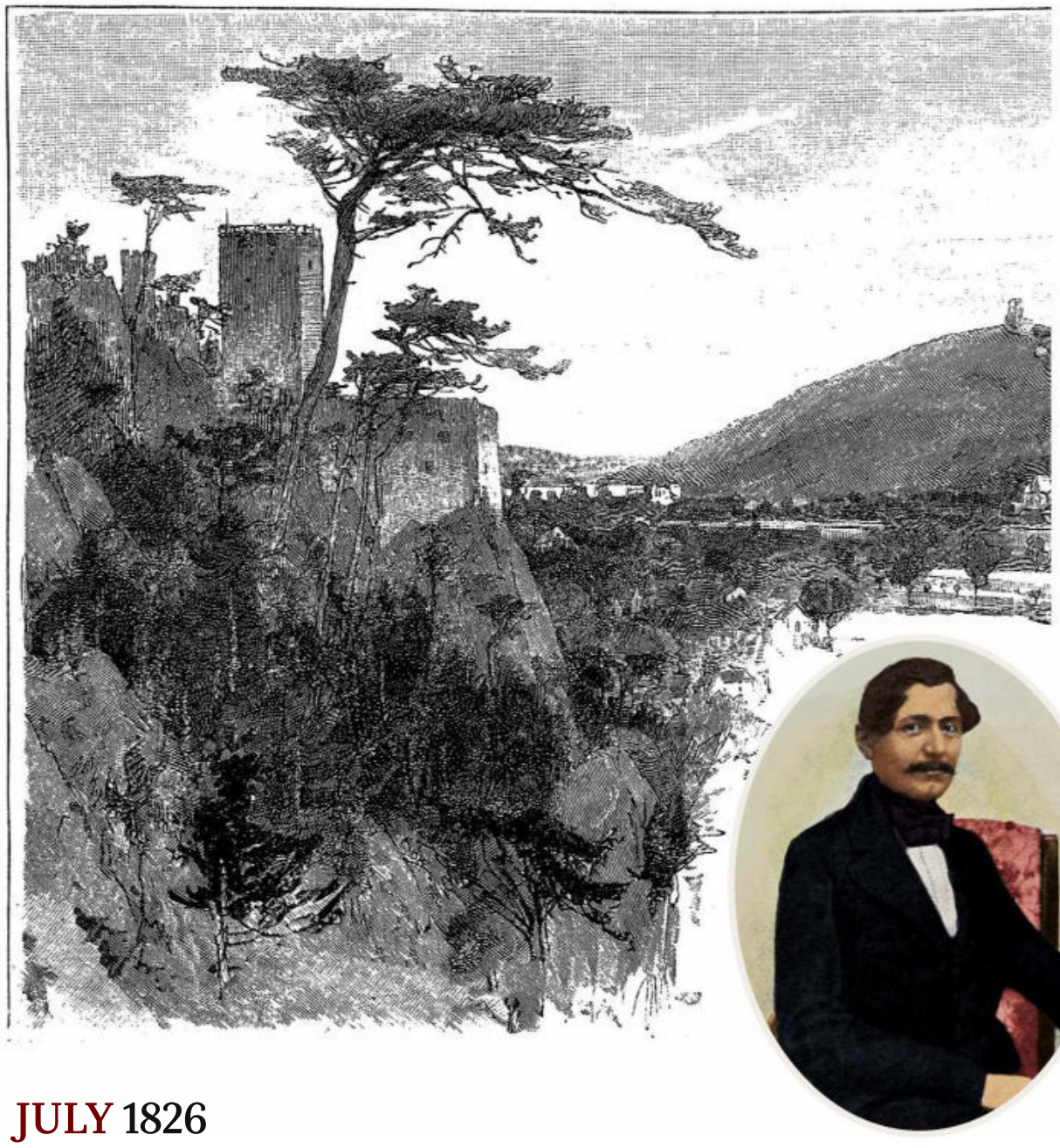
**Harry Sever** *Conductor*

**Born:** London, UK
**Career highlight:** Bizet's *Carmen* at Opera North this season – a beautiful production with a great cast. Working with touring companies is brilliant – you always hope there's someone in the audience experiencing the thrill of music for the first time.
**Musical hero:** Claudio Abbado's recordings are so fresh and vibrant – he encouraged a sense of making chamber music. He had humility and respect for the musicians, but also creativity and playfulness.
**Dream concert:** Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, staged with contemporary dancers. I love interdisciplinary collaboration – there's so much we can learn from one another.

**Anna Im** *Violinist*

**Born:** Daejeon, South Korea
**Career highlight:** Winning the 10th Michael Hill International Violin Competition, and recording my debut album of Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Clara Schumann, Paganini and Grieg mid-pandemic as part of the winner's prize.
**Musical heroes:** The array of emotions you can experience in a single moment listening to the music of Brahms is astonishing. I cannot imagine this extreme depth of feeling being communicated in any other artform.
**Dream concert:** Performing Mozart's Sinfonia concertante with violist Tabea Zimmermann and the Berlin Philharmonic.

## TIMEPIECE This month in history



GETTY, ALAMY, JAMES ROSE

JULY 1826

# Beethoven's tormented nephew pulls the trigger

On 29 July, 1826, a young man climbed up to the hillside ruins of Castle Rauhenstein in Baden, a spa town 20 miles south of Vienna. Arriving at his destination, he drew two pistols from his pocket. Aiming one at his head, he pulled the trigger, but the bullet either missed or misfired in the chamber. The second pistol, however, partially found its target. The bullet gouged the left-hand side of the shooter's skull without entering his brain, leaving him slumped and barely conscious.

Who was the unfortunate individual? It soon emerged his name was Karl van Beethoven, nephew of the famed composer Ludwig, and that his attempted suicide was anything but a spur-of-the-moment decision. Just days earlier Karl's landlord, Schlemmer, had warned Beethoven that the 19-year-old 'intended to shoot himself next Sunday at the latest'. Schlemmer found two pistols in Karl's room, but Karl had pawned his watch to buy replacements.

What pushed him to such a desperate situation? Karl himself had no doubt what had caused it. His uncle Ludwig had 'tormented him too much', he told police investigating the incident. 'I became worse because my uncle wanted me to be better'. Posterity has tended to agree with the unfortunate

A bleak episode: (left) Castle Rauhenstein in Baden; (below left) Karl van Beethoven in later life, his hair carefully combed to conceal the scar

Karl's analysis. Beethoven's fraught involvement with his nephew began 11 years earlier, when the composer's younger brother Kaspar died, leaving behind his wife Johanna and nine-year-old Karl. Kaspar's will originally made both Johanna and Beethoven Karl's guardians, but Johanna's name was subsequently deleted, seemingly at Beethoven's insistence. 'I did not wish to be bound up with such a bad woman in a matter of such importance as the education of the child,' he wrote.

What exactly was 'bad' about Johanna? Her conviction for embezzlement in 1811, after purloining a set of pearls that she was selling on consignment, was one notorious mark against her. Johanna was also, Beethoven believed, an adulteress – perhaps a prostitute – who had killed her husband by poisoning (Kaspar actually died from consumption). Morally outraged, he vowed to 'wrest a poor, unhappy child' from the clutches of a 'vicious', 'bestial' mother.

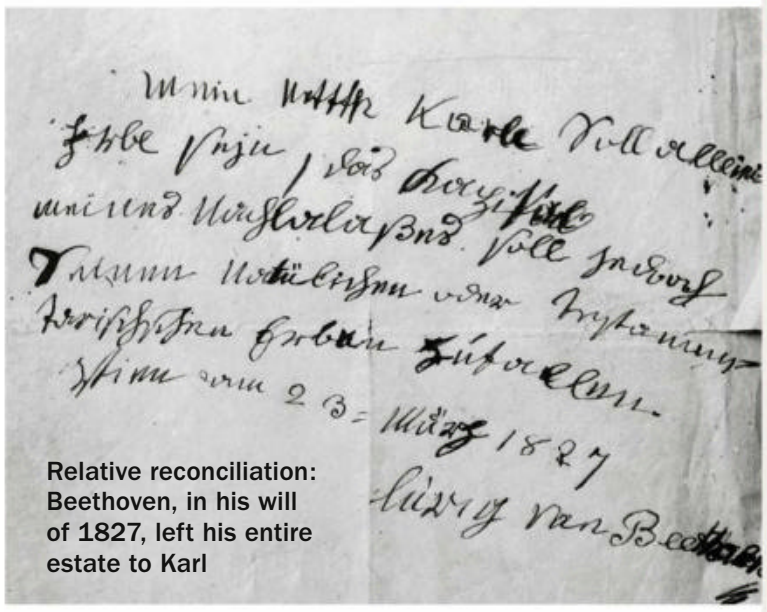
Beethoven's jaundiced view of Johanna was unquestionably exaggerated – 'an obsession bordering on the insane', one commentator has called it. She herself lived in a toxic relationship, with an abusive husband who allegedly once pinned her hand with a knife to the dinner table. Kaspar also beat his son, and likely Johanna too. Beethoven knew about the turmoil, and wanted to remove Karl from any further possibility of domestic upset.

Instead, he achieved exactly the opposite. Five years of legal wrangling for custody of his nephew followed, which only traumatised Karl further. Beethoven repeatedly tried to stop the boy seeing his mother, and exerted an iron control over his education. Unsurprisingly, Karl reacted badly, fleeing Beethoven's home, stealing money and at one point even striking his uncle.

By July 1826, Beethoven's stifling protectiveness had pushed Karl to breaking point. His attempted suicide at Castle Rauhenstein was, however, a turning point of sorts. On recovery, he joined the army, married and fathered five children. When Beethoven died in 1827, he left everything to Karl, making him financially comfortable for the future.

## Beethoven tried to stop Karl from seeing his mother, and exerted an iron control

In truth, Beethoven had never stopped loving the nephew he called 'my son'. He dreamed of shaping a young man to be proud of, one to fill the void of loneliness that Beethoven's own failure to build lasting emotional relationships had created. But as one Beethoven biographer has put it, 'he never realised that a child cannot be shaped like a piece of music'. ***Terry Blain***



Relative reconciliation: Beethoven, in his will of 1827, left his entire estate to Karl

Mourned on the 4th of July: Thomas Jefferson

## Also in July 1826

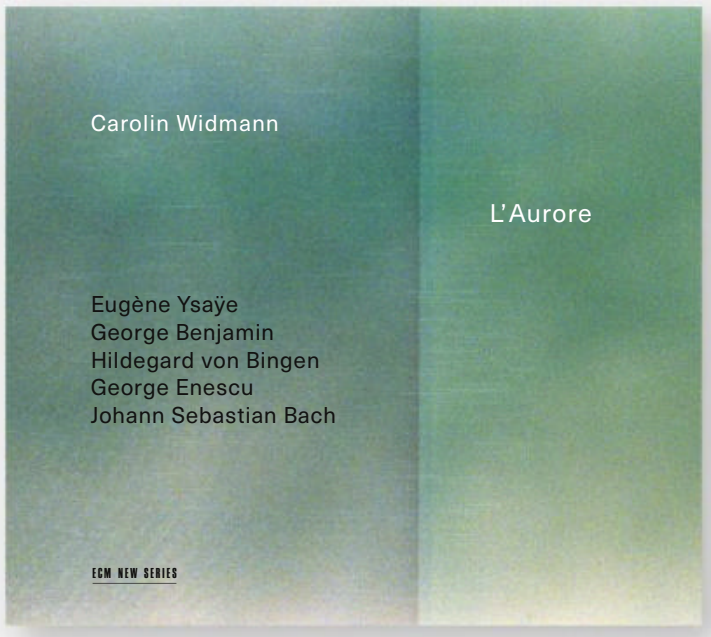
**4th:** On the 50th anniversary of the United States Declaration of Independence, former US presidents **Thomas Jefferson** and **John Adams** die within five hours of each other. Though the two fellow American revolutionaries had fallen out bitterly during the 1800 presidential election campaign, they later resumed their friendship.

**6th: Donizetti**'s *Elvida* is performed for the first time at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples. The one-act opera, to a libretto by the mediocre but prolific Giovanni Schmidt, tells of the heroics of a Castilian woman captured by the Moors in southern Spain in the late-15th century. Though composed to mark the birthday of Queen Maria of the Two Sicilies, it soon falls into neglect.

**7th:** In a letter to his sister Fanny, the 17-year-old **Felix Mendelssohn** tells of his intention 'to dream the *Midsummer Night's Dream*'. Inspired by reading a German translation of Shakespeare's play, the composer finishes his overture based on it the following month. The work is premiered in Stettin on 20 February 1827.

**26th:** Accused of teaching deist principles, schoolmaster **Cayetano Ripoll** is hanged in Valencia, thus becoming the final victim of the Spanish Inquisition. The means of execution, decided by the civil authority, is a disappointment to the Inquisition, who had wanted Ripoll to be burnt at the stake.

**31st:** In the **Russo-Persian War**, Abbas Mirza, crown prince of Iran, invades Karabakh and Talysh with an army of 35,000 men. When Aleksey Yermolov, the Russian governor general of the Caucasus, is reluctant to respond due to being badly outnumbered, Tsar Nicholas I sends out Count Ivan Paskevich to replace him.




## Carolin Widmann L'Aurore

Violinist Carolin Widmann's imaginative solo recital charts a broad path through the centuries, creating a programme of contrasts that spans from Hildegard von Bingen through J. S. Bach all the way to George Benjamin. En route, Widmann's "personal encyclopaedia" embraces works by Eugène Ysaÿe and George Enescu. The journey concludes with a radiant account of Bach's seminal Partita No. 2 in D minor.

ECM New Series 2709 CD

## Danish String Quartet PRISM IV

**No quartet playing today has the Danish's way with late Beethoven.** – The New York Times

**The Danish String Quartet's Prism series is building into an exceptionally rewarding venture.** – BBC Music Magazine

The penultimate volume of the Prism series combines Bach's fugue in G minor from the Well-Tempered Clavier (Book I) with Beethoven's String Quartet op. 132 and Felix Mendelssohn's String Quartet op. 13.

ECM New Series 2564 CD

## Heinz Holliger Lunea

Heinz Holliger's "dream opera" **Lunea** interweaves strands from the life and mind of Austrian poet Nikolaus Lenau. Lenau's last, fragmentary writings have fired Holliger's imagination and led to the creation of an intricately inventive work with a marvellously evocative lead role for baritone Christian Gerhaher. The edition contains an extensive 120-page booklet with the full libretto by Händl Klaus, synopses of each of the opera's 23 scenes as well as liner essays by Roman Brotbeck and Christian Gerhaher, and more.

ECM New Series 2622/23 2-CD

Distributed & marketed
in UK & Ireland
by Proper Music Distribution

www.propermusic.com

www.ecmrecords.com

## Football fans are invited to check the score

Tunes from classical music have long been heard on football terraces – think Handel and Verdi, here – so flipping things the other way round seems a logical next step. Fans are being invited to audition for a new opera based on the beautiful game that will be shown in the Autumn on Sky Arts, who promise lucky applicants that they will have the chance to train their voice with a top singing coach. Though classic terrace ditties such as 'Swindon Town is falling down' may prove a little fruity for primetime TV, we presume that at least one or two familiar chants will make it into the score. As for the title, how about *Un footballo in maschera*? Or *Così fan footy,* perhaps?

## Little Britten looks set to get a seaside view

At first glance, we feared this was one of those awkward moments where someone had misread feet for inches but everyone decided to put a brave face on it and carry on. In fact, the above photo shows the working model (or maquette) of *Britten As A Boy*, a statue that, it is hoped, will one day grace the seafront in Lowestoft, the Suffolk town where the composer (pictured, left, as a young lad) was born in 1913. Admiring the maquette are (left to right) radio presenter and author Zeb Soanes, local MP Peter Aldous and sculptor Ian Rank-Broadley, who will be creating the full-size version. A major fund-raising drive is now under way to allow it all to happen, details of which can be found at ***brittenasaboy.com***

BENJAMIN EALOVEGA, MICK HOWES **ILLUSTRATION:** JONTY CLARK

MEET THE COMPOSER

# Roderick Williams

**Self-fulfilment: 'If I wanted to premiere a song of mine, I'd just put it on the programme'**

**One of today's leading baritones, Roderick Williams has also been ploughing a furrow as a composer of all kinds of music for years. He recently wrote further movements for his *Knepp Piano Trio*, a work inspired by a wildland project in Sussex, to be premiered by the Stradivarius Piano Trio at Sedgwick Park House on 22 June.**

**I have always arranged and composed.** I've never thought of composing as this Beethovian idea of wandering the hills with a notebook, thinking 'I must write a great theme'. It's much more that people might play a strange combination of instruments and they need some music for a concert, which I can provide.

**In the early days I composed songs that I myself could sing.** If you think of all those composers who have written songs but who don't sing, they have to find someone to perform and programme their songs. I skipped that bit, so if I wanted to premiere a song of mine, I'd just put it on the programme.

**I think we're getting used to the idea that people can do different things.** To this day, though, people who know me as a singer come across a piece of my music and ask me 'Oh, is that you?!' When I joined [publishers] Edition Peters, a few people got in touch on social media and said 'I hope you're not giving up the singing!' Why would I do that?

**It is true that, as a singer, I am quite busy.** Nonetheless, there is still a lot of waiting and lots of travelling. That sort of time is absolutely perfect for getting on with something like composition. I spend a lot of the time in airport lounges and trains, and even on car journeys, processing stuff.

**Discovering that a piece has had a life is magical for me.** A piece called *O Adonai*, which I wrote for the Ex Cathedra ensemble, has been sung all over the world; and St Paul's Cathedral Choir seem to do it yearly.

**When someone commissions me, I first of all want to write 'them' a piece.** And so, with the *Knepp Trio*, rather than write 'a' piano trio, I wanted to write a piano trio for the three people I know and I wanted to write it for that place and that particular occasion. So Knepp was interwoven into it, as was this idea of the pairing of Turtle Doves – hence using Vaughan Williams's 'The Turtle Dove', but also the idea of wildlife and of things being under threat.

## StudioSecrets

Key change: Miloš Karadaglić moves to Sony

### We reveal who's recording what and where...

Sony Classical recently signed ***Miloš Karadaglić***. The popular guitarist has recorded for DG and Decca until now, but says he is 'very excited to be joining Sony Classical and building a future together'. His first project as part of the partnership is set to be a recording of Baroque repertoire, scheduled for release early next year.

Taking Miloš's place at Decca is up-and-coming Brazilian classical guitarist ***Plínio Fernandes***. The 27 year-old, whose hero is Andrés Segovia, says his signing to Decca Gold is 'a dream come true'. His debut album, titled *Saudade*, is set for release on 8 July and features guest artists Sheku Kanneh-Mason and Brazilian vocalists Maria Rita.

***Chineke! Orchestra*** have also announced a major new partnership with Decca, which will see the label release all future recordings by the the trailblazing orchestra. The first, out in August, features music by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, including his Violin Concerto and Ballade in A minor, plus a premiere recording of a work by his daughter, Avril Coleridge-Taylor.

***Opera Rara*** continues to present thrilling resorations of forgotten works, with recordings of Mercadante's *Il proscritto* and Offenbach's *La Princesse de Trebizonde* planned, ahead of performances at the Barbican and Queen Elizabeth Hall in June and September. The recordings will be released in the spring and summer.

Another opera premiere is coming from Boston, where ***Odyssey Opera*** and the Boston Modern Orchestra Project are presenting Anthony Davis's *X: The Life and Times of Malcom X*. The Strand Theatre, which is near to where a teenaged Malcolm Little (X) once lived, is the location for the performance and recording. Long since out of print, Davis's opera will be available in a revised edition, to be released later in the year.

ALESSANDRO PETRINI, ESTHER HAASE, MARCO BORGGREVE

# REWIND

## Great artists talk about their past recordings

### This month: I MUSICI *Ensemble*

**OUR FINEST MOMENT**
**LUX3570**
Sumi Jo (soprano); I Musici
*Decca 485 7161 (2021)*

At the end of December we went on a tour of South Korea with our friend Sumi Jo, a real talent and a major artist with whom we have worked for several years. This one was an incredible experience and, as a matter of fact, we could say it was the crowning of a friendship and artistic relationship we are really proud of. We proposed very interesting repertoire for *LUX3570* – the title due to a double anniversary: 35 years of Sumi Jo's career and our 70 years. The album means a lot for our friendship and it draws a path linking our repertoire to hers. It was recorded at the wonderful Collegio Internazionale San Lorenzo da Brindisi at the edge of Rome. It belongs to the Capuchin friars and is surrounded by lots of greenery.

We are really happy with our relationship with Sumi, who is a friend, first of all. Our relationship was incredible from our very first meeting: she proposed Frascati, a small town near Rome, as the location to get to know each other and, as it happened, Francesca Vicari, one of the members who was arranging that meeting, came from

A rich recorded legacy: I Musici recently celebrated 70 years of music-making

Frascati and her parents lived there. Later we found out Sumi had a house there, too. An incredible sign of destiny!

## OUR FONDEST MEMORY

**Vivaldi** *String Concertos*
I Musici
*Fonè 074 (2011)*

This recording was released for our 60th anniversary, at the end of 2011. We recorded some concertos for strings by Antonio Vivaldi.

We decided to make this recording in Volterra, an ancient village in Tuscany, and we recorded in a small theatre

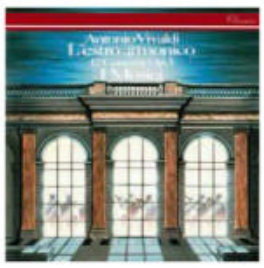
there. Giulio Cesare Ricci, our friend and music industry executive at that time, came from Tuscany and knew several places with excellent characteristics to make a recording. He suggested this small theatre with a perfect acoustic. And it was perfect indeed. He loved using ambient microphones.

It was winter, and it was terribly cold. Moreover, it was a tough period for mankind. We just had the news that a huge tsunami arrived on the coast of Japan. A member of the group, Pasquale Pellegrino, had some relatives there and we were all really worried. So our memory of this experience is actually made up of many difficulties. It was so cold that our instruments, in fact, suffered a bit. However, it was tough mostly for the strings; we tried to keep them in their cases as much as possible, just taking them out when we had to play. The result, though, was really excellent despite all of these hard events and the recording was really great.

## WE'D LIKE ANOTHER GO AT...

**Vivaldi** *L'estro armonico*
I Musici
*Philips 4121282 (1983)*

I Musici has recorded *L'estro armonico* by Antonio Vivaldi twice, but we would like to record it once more. This score offers



us the possibility to show the main qualities of our group: any one of our players is able to stand up and play the role of soloist, and this music is written in a way that enhances this aspect. The two recordings are very different, but that's totally normal. We recorded them 20 years apart. Players changed, the first violin changed. Everything was different. Moreover, we like to interpret what we play according to how we are in that precise moment – of course we follow our performance practice, but it's always interesting leaving a different picture of the group in that moment.

Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos* are something that we would also like to record once more – every time that we play that score it seems like a 'musical bacchanale', a great music party in which we meet different soloists.

We love launching new projects, and of course the repertoire we choose is the main reason to choose this or that location to record in. The place we look for is always linked to the music we are going to perform, and we would always prefer to record in a studio.

*I Musici's new recording of Vivaldi's The Four Seasons is out now on Decca*

## BuriedTreasure

Cellist ***Antonio Meneses*** introduces us to a selection of his favourite recordings

**Guarnieri Cello Sonata No. 1 for Cello and Piano**
Antonio Meneses (cello), Celina Szrvinsk (piano) *Avie AV2162*

Camargo Guarnieri was the most important composer to come from Brazil after Villas-Lobos. He wrote three cello sonatas, and I played and recorded the first one back in 2008/09. It's a wonderful piece, written in 1931, not very long and very polyphonic with wonderful melodies. The last movement is wild from beginning to end – it's actually called *Dança selvagem*, which means 'wild dance'.

**Villa-Lobos Fantasia**
János Starker (cello); Paraiba Symphony Orchestra/Eleazar de Carvalho *Delos DE1017*

Villa-Lobos wrote this Fantasy around 1945 and it's very beautiful. The cello sings, especially in the first and last movements; it's as if it were really composed for a singer. As always in Villa-Lobos there are Brazilian rhythms, and he even stole a little bit from Argentina – in the last movement there is a kind of Tango. It was written for Serge Koussevitsky, actually, and I played it for the first time when I was 17 or 18.

**Villa-Lobos Piano Trios**
Monique Duphil (piano), Jay Humeston (cello), Antonio Spiller (violin) *Marco Polo 8223182*

Villa-Lobos's piano trios are works that are rarely played. They belong to the first period of his life, before he went to Europe, but at a time when he was still discovering his own language and borrowing from Debussy and Fauré. They are conceived with a huge piano part – you could almost say they are like piano concertos. You find everything in this music; it's beautiful, especially the slow movements, which are very touching.

*Antonio Meneses's recording of Brahms Cello Sonatas & Songs is out now on Avie*

THE LISTENING SERVICE

# Nothing to get cross over

Though classical crossover is often met with snobbery by purists, historically the phenomenon has acted as a fundamental creative catalyst, says **Tom Service**

ILLUSTRATION: MARIA CORTE MAIDAGAN

Classical crossover. A term that makes purists recoil, that defines a genre-less genre that has classical musical culture up in arms even while it has non-specialist charts in its thrall. Yet crossover's essential philosophy isn't as separate from classical ideology as purists might like to think, and neither is it as genuinely open-hearted in its crossing of genres as its fans might suppose.

Crossover is about turning the ambition of the operatic into the glamour of the poperatic, fusing the emotional scale of classical music with the marketing and soundworld of pop. The result ought to be records, performances and careers that appeal to the biggest possible audience with the greatest possible impact.

And it works: it's not only that Ludovico Einaudi, André Rieu, Katherine Jenkins, Michael Ball and Alfie Boe usually sell more records than musicians who confine themselves to the un-crossed-over classical; they're only the latest manifestations of a phenomenon that goes back to the start of the record industry. Enrico Caruso and Nellie Melba were doing something similar in their recording careers, singing operatic offcuts, folk songs and popular tunes in new arrangements to sell millions of 78s; and between those recording pioneers and today's crossover artistes is a chain of connection from Mario Lanza to the Three Tenors, from Kenneth McKellar to Andrea Bocelli.

And there's another sense in which the snobbery directed at crossover is both misplaced and ahistorical. Without crossing popular musical theatre with masonic ritual and operatic virtuosity, Mozart's *The Magic Flute* couldn't have been composed; without crossing Renaissance polyphony with Baroque counterpoint and Romantic sublimity,

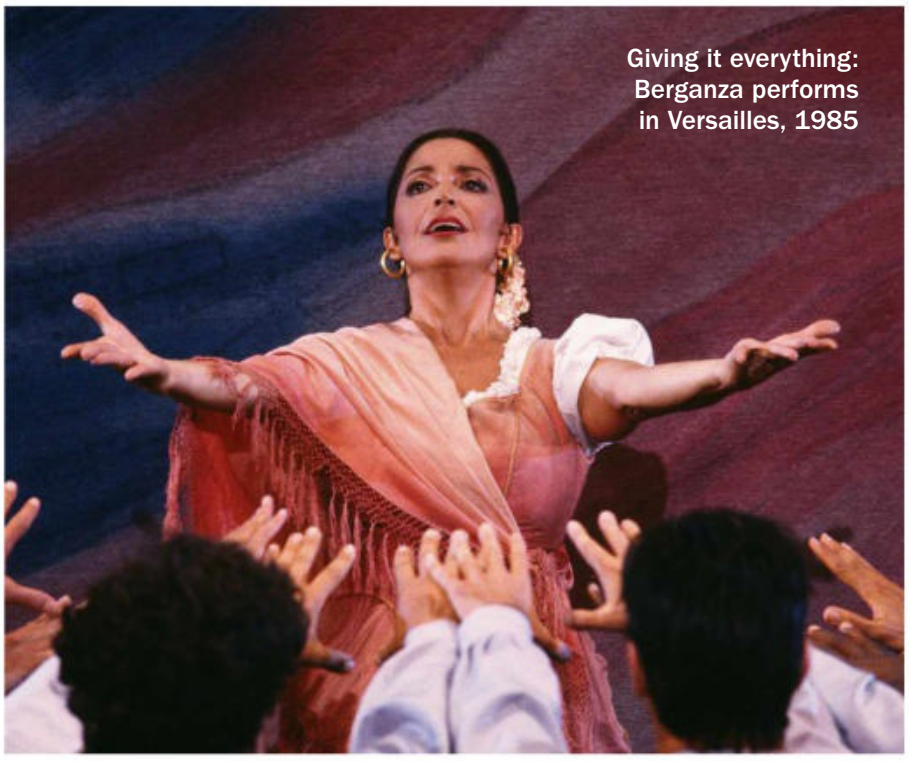
## Crossover is an idea that goes back to the very start of the record industry

Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* wouldn't have been written; and without fusing oratorio with song-cycle, symphony and opera of the imagination, Mahler's Eighth Symphony couldn't exist.

The weirdness of the music in today's classical crossover charts is that it's less likely to cross genres than contemporary 'classical' music: crossover is now a separate genre of production, product and performance that's defined by and cosseted in its own realm of poperatic sheen, which doesn't – ironically – cross over with anything other than itself.

It used to be so different. And if you want to experience the true power of what's possible when opera meets pop, a place in which the crossover equation – more+more=most – really does shake the foundations of the sky, you need to hear Freddie Mercury's album with Montserrat Caballé: *Barcelona*. The meeting of those voices crosses the streams of musical genres to produce something irresistibly excessive that flies into a new musical dimension: prepare to travel with Freddie and Montserrat to crossover and beyond... to Barcelona!

**Tom Service explores how music works in *The Listening Service* on Sundays at 5pm**



Giving it everything: Berganza performs in Versailles, 1985

## Teresa Berganza Born 1933 *Mezzo-soprano*

A radiant presence on stage, the Madrid-born Berganza enjoyed a phenomenally successful career. She started as she meant to go on, for within a year or so of her 1957 debut – in a Provence production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* – she had appeared at La Scala, Glyndebourne and in the US. Popular appeal and critical acclaim soon followed, and though she would dip her toe into a variety of operas, she focused her skills in the Rossini and Mozart roles for which she would become known worldwide. Though she initially resisted playing Bizet's Carmen, she went on to make that role her own, too, following a triumphant 1977 performance in Edinburgh. Her early aspiration was to teach music and join a convent choir, but she was persuaded to take to the stage and never looked back. And while she wasn't a fan of making recordings, her legacy on record is nonetheless exceptional.

## Simon Preston Born 1938 *Organist, Choirmaster*

A true showman at the organ console, Simon Preston attracted audience adulation, but occasionally ruffled feathers as well. His 1980s role as organist and choirmaster at Westminster Abbey was increasingly at odds with a growing international concert career, though while there he blew the dust off overlooked English repertoire. A chorister at King's College, Cambridge, the Bournemouth-born musician would return there as an organ scholar, working closely with David Willcocks and performing regularly for the choir's Nine Lessons and Carols services. A 1964 performance of Messiaen at the BBC Proms resulted in a ten-minute standing ovation.

## Vangelis Born 1943 *Composer*

An artist with a singular voice, Vangelis (born Évangelos Odysséas Papathanassíou) was a reluctant star who was happiest at the keyboard in his studio. Born in Greece, where his career began as a film composer, the largely self-taught musician flirted with pop and enjoyed chart success with the likes of Demis Roussos and Jon Anderson (recording as 'Jon & Vangelis'). Acclaimed solo albums in the 1970s were followed by a clutch of iconic scores in the 1980s written and performed for films including *Chariots of Fire* (for which he won an Oscar), *Blade Runner* and *Missing*.

## Also remembered...

**Alexander Toradze** (*born 1952*), was a Georgian-born pianist who won silver at the Van Cliburn Competition in 1977. Toradze moved to the US in 1983 and went on to become a much-respected teacher (based at Indiana University) and an in-demand concert performer.

GETTY

LINN

A highly original
Linn debut from violinist
Jonian Ilias Kadesha

CKD 676

Works for solo violin by
Bach, Biber, Kurtág, Schnittke,
Auerbach and Winkelman

Listen on
Apple Music

ALL ALBUMS AVAILABLE IN STUDIO MASTER FROM WWW.LINNRECORDS.COM
DISTRIBUTED IN THE UK BY RSK ENTERTAINMENT &
IN THE US BY NAXOS OF AMERICA

outhere
MUSIC

Multiple strings: Ayanna Witter-Johnson is an equally talented composer and cellist

# Music to my ears

## What the classical world has been listening to this month

### Anoushka Shankar
**Sitar player and composer**

I recently went to see the cellist and composer **Ayanna Witter-Johnson** at Wigmore Hall. She's a friend who I have worked with a lot, so it was lovely to see where she's got to and where she's going. I loved how she centred the show on her compositions. She pulled in two quartets, and lots of different guests, and so you really got to hear the scope of one person's compositions.

The singer **Arooj Aftab**'s newest album, *Vulture Prince*, came out last year. It's impossible to say if it's my favourite, but it's probably my most listened to. I love what she's done with these beautiful old Sufi songs – really gorgeous, minimalist arrangements that bring them into a subtly different space. People seem to be responding to these songs from all over the world in a way that maybe wouldn't be possible in their more traditional arrangements.

Radio 3 asked me to host a three-part show about Indian classical music and as a result I have had the chance to go back and listen to so much music. I've heard things I've never heard before, or things I haven't heard since childhood. So it has been a really beautiful, immersive experience. **MS Subbulakshmi**'s 'Bhavayami Gopalabalam' is a beloved song in Carnatic music; it really made me feel nostalgic when I heard it again.

> When you have to keep coming back to a piece of music that's a really good sign

**And also...**

On my bedside table there's a book called *On Connection* that **Kae Tempest** released during the flux and madnesss of the pandemic. It's a really compassionate, loving book about connection and how to access it. And I think one of the things that is so incredible about Kae is that their work is so accessible and so modern, and yet the themes are so spiritual and so bravely core.

*Anoushka Shankar performs at the Cheltenham Music Festival on 9 July*

### Clare Hammond **Pianist**

The works that have stuck in my mind recently are **Elizabeth Maconchy**'s string quartets in a recording of the complete set by the Hanson, Bingham and Mistry quartets. I have been aware of Maconchy for years, but I had not really engaged with her before. The quartets are incredibly invigorating on every single level: physically, emotionally, intellectually. The quality of music is breathtaking, and she has real vision and expressive scope. They are quite extraordinary and on a par with the Bartók quartets.

I've been playing **George Walker**'s *Variations on a Kentucky Folk Song* on the piano, so I started exploring his orchestral works for an idea of his style. His Violin Concerto is so distinctive, and I found it wove its way into my consciousness. When you listen to something enjoyable and powerful, and have to keep coming back to it, that's a really good sign. I have been listening to the recording of it by his son Gregory Walker, the Sinfonia Varsovia and Ian Hobson.

After a day of practice, I don't really want to listen to classical music as I have reached saturation point, so I have been listening to jazz pianist **Tord Gustavsen**'s

### CRITIC'S CHOICE

**Nicholas Anderson Rameau**'s late three-act comédie-lyrique *Les Paladins* has previously suffered on disc from savagely cut versions omitting some of its finest music. I'm enjoying a vibrant recording from Valentin Tournet and La Chapelle Harmonique in which nothing at all is omitted – there is even an addendum of music removed from the earliest rehearsals. Sandrine Piau, Anne-Catherine Gillet and Mathias Vidal head a mainly strong cast in an opera stuffed with wonderfully original airs and dances.

*Opening*, which is his latest album. I love the atmosphere he creates and the way his music takes me out of myself. I also use it when the children are screaming – I put Gustavsen on and they calm down. I don't really know if you should use music in such a utilitarian way!

**And also...**

The TV series **Derry Girls** is absolutely hilarious, but also the soundtrack brings back a lot of memories. I can hear just one line and I will remember being at the kitchen table. I never really engaged with pop music much when I was growing up as I had my head in my classical bubble, but even so I have realised how deeply embedded a lot of that music was between the ages of nine and 15.

*Clare Hammond appears at the Up Close and Musical festival at the Fidelio Cafe, London on 24 June*

## Cheryl Frances-Hoad

**Composer**

I'm currently living in Oxford, where they have a terrific jazz club called The Spin. A couple of weeks ago, I heard the **David Gordon Trio** perform there and they were fantastic. They're a jazz piano trio, but Gordon himself is a classical harpsichordist as well, so you can hear all sorts of references in the music. And after the last couple of years, simply being able to get up and go to things is just wonderful.

I've been listening to an awful lot of choral music and going regularly to Evensong, particularly at **Merton College** where I have been the visiting research fellow. The college choir were brilliant at the beginning of the academic year, but it's been wonderful to hear them get to know each other over the months and hear their sound and ensemble developing.

Calming the kids: pianist Tord Gustavsen

### CRITIC'S CHOICE

**Michael Tanner**
Pianist **Piotr Anderszewski** was a rather recent discovery for me, but since I first heard him in recital in Cambridge I have been listening to all his not-numerous-enough discs, of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin and a fewother composers. His most recent release, a selection of Bach's Second Book of Preludes and Fugues, selected by him as 'character pieces', deserves and repays endless listening, but so do his other recordings. He seems to me to be the Sviatoslav Richter of our generation – a great artist who gives far too few concerts.

Hearing them sing Palestrina's Missa Brevis recently was particularly memorable.

I have also been listening non-stop to The Tallis Scholars singing **Byrd**'s *O Lord, Make Thy Servant Elizabeth Our Queen*, as that is the work that I have been commissioned to base a new piece on for this year's Jubilee Prom. I had it on constant repeat – and particularly the final 'Amen' section – for about a fortnight. Listening to Byrd really is a composition lesson, and I've been trying to absorb his sense of never-ending lines but without making it sound like a pastiche.

**And also...**

As my job at Merton includes accommodation and full dining rights, I have recently started **jogging** in a bid to prevent doubling in size! Last Sunday, I set a new personal best for a 10km run, of which I was very proud. Usually I run through Christ Church Meadow and down along the river past the Isis Farmhouse pub which you can only access by foot – though I don't stop there while jogging, I do go there at other times.

*Cheryl Frances-Hoad's Excelsus for Solo Cello is reviewed on p92*

# Our Choices The *BBC Music Magazine* team's current favourites

### Charlotte Smith *Editor*

Last month I had the great pleasure of attending a concert by South African cellist ***Abel Selaocoe*** (below) and the Manchester Collective at London's Southbank Centre. The programme, called *The Oracle*, was an intoxicating mix of core classical works by Vivaldi and Stravinsky, music inspired by the Afrofuturism movement and improvisations and compositions by Selaocoe himself. Equally adept as a cellist and singer, he was perfectly matched in virtuosity by the Collective – and in enthusiasm by the audience.

### Jeremy Pound *Deputy editor*

Until recently, my familiarity with ***Chausson*** had not stretched much beyond his Piano Trio. A couple of concerts on Radio 3 plus some guidance from one our reviewers as to where to turn next has helped to change that, and I'm now particularly smitten with his Concert for Violin, Piano and String Quartet, with its rippling, atmospheric central movements and thrillingly fraught finale. The same reviewer, incidentally, has also introduced me to Chaussons aux pommes, for which I am similarly grateful.

### Michael Beek *Reviews editor*

I had been eager to attend the Szczecin Philharmonic's celebration of the life and music of ***James Horner***, so it was wonderful to be able to watch via a livestream when the event finally went ahead recently, after Covid had caused its postponement. Quite besides the bounty of suites and themes from the late composer's filmography, the filmed insights from his family were illuminating and rather moving.

### Alice Pearson *Cover CD editor*

Lovers of Sibelius's symphonies could enjoy extending their listening experience to the Fifth Symphony by ***Bax*** – it's the sort of work that fires the imagination and could easily have been a film score. Every time I hear it, it conjures up new images, and on this occasion I've been listening to an archive BBC recording from 1971 by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra under Vernon Handley, a great Bax conductor.

### Rebecca Franks *Freelance contributor*

A few years back, some friends and I went on a day trip to South Wales and made an impromptu visit to Barry. I had no idea that the town had once been home to ***Grace Williams***, one of Wales's leading composers, but the visit sprang to mind again recently when I heard her *Sea Sketches* performed brilliantly by the Britten Sinfonia. They believed in every note, bringing the Glamorganshire coast vividly to musical life.

GETTY, MLUNGIS MLUNGWANA, LAURA LEWIS, PHILIP GATWARD

# CHANDOS
THE SOUND OF CLASSICAL

# JULY RELEASES

## RECORDING OF THE MONTH

## HAYDN
### Complete Piano Trios, Vol. 1
### Fischer: one bar wonder

**Trio Gaspard**

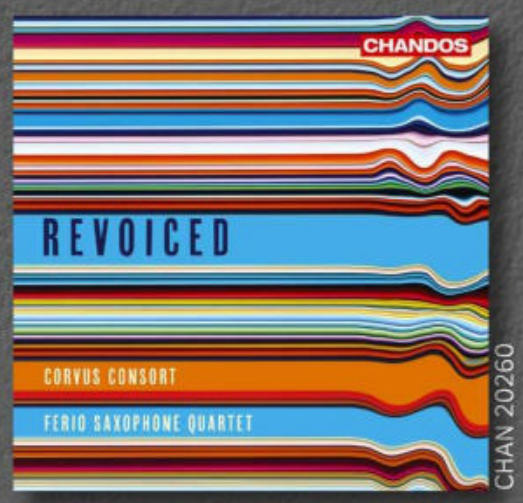
After more than a decade of immersion in these works, Trio Gaspard embarks on a complete survey of Haydn's piano trios. Each volume is designed as a stand-alone programme and each will feature a new work commissioned to reflect on one of the original trios – in this instance, *one bar wonder* by Johannes Fischer.

CHAN 20244

## LOUIS LORTIE PLAYS CHOPIN, VOL. 7

**Louis Lortie**

Louis Lortie's Chopin series has been praised for 'Chopin playing of sublime genius' (*Fanfare*) and as 'distinguished by... humanistic, selfless music-making, devoid of sentimentality' (*Gramophone*). Volume 7 explores Chopin's 'nationalistic' style.

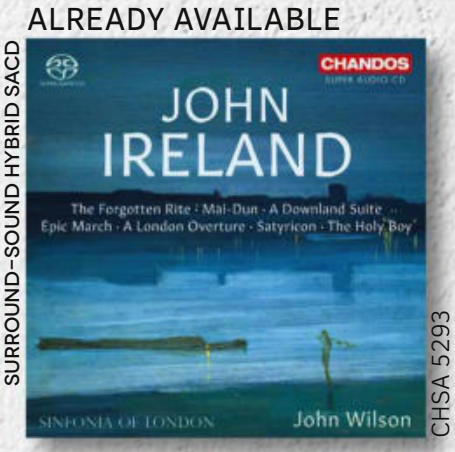



## REVOICED

**Corvus Consort | Ferio Saxophone Quartet | Freddie Crowley**

The Ferio Saxophone Quartet and Corvus Consort combine forces in this fascinating collection of Renaissance, baroque, and contemporary works, all arranged for this album by the composers themselves or by Freddie Crowley.

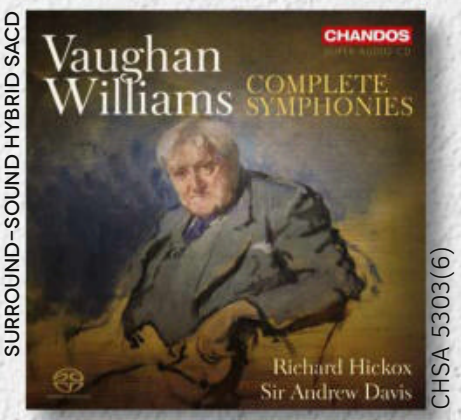
ALREADY AVAILABLE




## JOHN IRELAND
### ORCHESTRAL WORKS

**Sinfonia of London | John Wilson**

John Wilson and Sinfonia of London turn to the music of John Ireland: the disc includes the overture *Satyricon*, *A Downland Suite*, and the symphonic rhapsody *Mai-Dun*.




## VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
### ORCHESTRAL WORKS

Celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Vaughan Williams with this reissue of the first complete recording of the symphonies in Surround Sound. The box set, at budget price, includes radio interviews with Ursula Vaughan Williams, Barbirolli, Boult, and the composer himself.

WWW.CHANDOS.NET
[MP3 * LOSSLESS * STUDIO * SURROUND]
[SACD * CD * USB]

Spotify · Listen on MUSIC · prestomusic · EUROPADISC

STAY IN THE KNOW

YouTube

Chandos Records, Chandos House, 1 Commerce Park, Commerce Way, Colchester, Essex CO2 8HX. Tel: 01206 225200

# Richard Morrison

## An initiative by the CBSO may shake up the UK state education system

When orchestras aren't doing what the world expects them to do – dressing in formal black and playing symphonies in concert halls – they are often doing rather more exciting things. For instance, sending musicians, like missionaries, into schools, hospitals, factories and shopping malls. Or pioneering new sounds by young composers in disused warehouses. A lot of that goes on, but it's often below the radar, unreported by the press.

Well, I hope the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra's latest 'different' project makes a huge splash – locally, nationally and internationally – because it could transform musical life. The CBSO hasn't stopped being a 'proper' orchestra, of course. But it will soon take on an additional role in Sandwell, one of the poorest boroughs in the West Midlands. The CBSO has teamed up with Sir Mark Grundy's Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust, which already runs a string of high-performing primary and secondary schools, to open a new school that will teach a full curriculum of subjects, but with special emphasis on music. Non-selective and non-fee-paying, it will in effect offer a private-school level of music education, led by CBSO mentors, to children of many diverse ethnic backgrounds and from far-from-affluent families.

The project has been in the pipeline since 2017, but in May this year it took a giant leap forward when building started on the chosen site in West Bromwich. To be called the Shireland CBSO Academy, the school will accept applications from this July and open its doors in September 2023, initially with six classes of year 7 students and a year 12 group (or sixth form, as we wrinklies used to call it). By 2027 it should be catering for nearly 900 students, aged 11 to 18.

I hope the ripples spread far beyond the West Midlands. The biggest obstacle to the proper teaching of music in schools is not lack of money – though that is pretty daunting – but the wrong attitude. It's been the view of those in authority, whether politicians or educationalists, that the arts aren't 'serious' academic pursuits. The people behind the new academy believe that this notion will be proved wrong by measuring the exam results of the school's pupils against those of normal state schools in the same area. This evidence will show that intensive immersion in music, far from distracting pupils from their other studies, increases their intellectual capabilities in all areas.

> The arts would be seen not as luxuries, but as the key to unlocking children's full potential

All orchestras do educational work, but this is something deeper and potentially more transformative. So is the decision by a London-based ensemble, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, to relocate itself – lock, stock and Baroque bassoons – in a big, bustling north London comprehensive school: Acland Burghley School in Tufnell Park. The idea is that there will be a synergy, a mutually beneficial exchange of experiences, between musicians and students. It's early days yet – the OAE moved in only last year – but a similar project involving the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie, which moved into a comprehensive school in Bremen, apparently produced remarkable improvements in pupils' academic performance as well as musical skills.

My hope is that these radical projects will prompt other arts institutions to get involved in running schools. Imagine if, for example, English National Opera were to live up to its name and team up with an academy group to open a new comprehensive school in, say, Sunderland that integrated singing and acting into every school day. Or if the Royal Shakespeare Company got involved in a new school in one of those culturally deprived south Yorkshire towns such as Doncaster or Rotherham – a school that offered working-class children the kind of stage training those posh lads at Eton get as a matter of course.

Sceptics will argue that such ventures might be great for students at the schools concerned, but don't do anything for the rest; that even if every major arts institution in Britain founded its own academy, that would still leave millions of young people in schools without adequate arts teaching. True, but imagine the galvanising effect on parents and educationalists when these new arts-run schools started producing students whose all-round academic achievements were matched by excellent musical or artistic skills. Wouldn't every state school be under pressure to produce the same results? Suddenly the arts would be seen not as inessential luxuries in children's lives, but as the key to unlocking their full potential in every area.

*Richard Morrison is chief music critic and a columnist of The Times*

# 100 NOTABLE BBC PROMS

## Jeremy Pound celebrates the centenary of the BBC by looking at some of the finest moments – plus a few not-so-glorious episodes – from its guardianship of the world's greatest classical music festival

As the rather natty logo on the front of this magazine will tell you, the BBC turns 100 years old in 2022 – expect all manner of party poppers and hullaballoo when the big day itself arrives in October. For classical music fans, there is in fact quite a lot to celebrate, as the staging and broadcasting of performances has been at the heart of the Beeb's activities right from Day One. And most famous of these is, of course, the Proms. While the famous festival founded by Robert Newman and Henry Wood has been in existence for 127 years, around three-quarters of that has been under the watchful eye of 'Auntie' – a period that has seen Proms that range from joyful to doom-laden, from sternly serious to splendidly silly. Here, we present 100 of the most memorable...

GETTY

### 13 August 1927
### Auntie takes over

Though the BBC began life in 1922, it was five years later that the organisation took over the running of the Proms. Now 32 years old, the festival itself was very popular but not in the greatest financial health – with co-founder Robert Newman having died the year before, things were looking iffy. Keen to find a way to broadcast concerts from the Queen's Hall, the BBC saw its chance… and pounced. 'When I walked on to the platform for my first Promenade Concert under the British Broadcasting Corporation, I felt really elated,' wrote conductor Henry Wood later. 'I realised the work of such a large part of my life had been saved from an untimely death.'

Early leaders: Henry Wood in action; (right) violinist Daisy Kennedy lost her way; (left) the Queen's Hall is remembered at the BBC's Henry Wood House

## 24 August 1927
After her performance of Brahms's Violin Concerto grinds to a halt midway, soloist Daisy Kennedy blames a lack of rehearsal time. The BBC denies responsibility.

## 11 August 1928
Absent for the first year of the BBC Proms, the decorative fountain is restored to the centre of the Queen's Hall for the new season. It continues to bring watery relief to hot and sweaty Prommers until 2011.

## 24 August 1928
Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is performed in its entirety and with full chorus for the first time since 1902. From now on, it will become a regular part of each Proms season.

## 08 August 1931
Brought together as an ensemble the previous autumn, the BBC Symphony Orchestra makes its Proms debut on the First Night.

## 22 August 1931
Webern's Passacaglia Op. 1 is performed for the first time in Britain, but the critics are largely sniffy about a work they regard as little more than juvenilia.

## 14 August 1934
Mooted in previous seasons, Berg's *Three Fragments from Wozzeck* gets its Proms premiere, sung by soprano May Blyth.

## 19 September 1935
An all-Russian Prom includes the British premiere of Shostakovich's First Symphony and an aria from the 28-year-old composer's *Lady Macbeth of*

War and piece: (right) Vaughan Williams's Fifth offered a glimpse of better times; (below) the Royal Albert Hall, pressed into Proms service in 1941

*Mtsensk*, a work dismissed in *Pravda* the next year as 'a muddle instead of music'.

## 11 August 1938

A 24-year-old Benjamin Britten gives the world premiere of his Piano Concerto. 'This is not a stylish work,' grumps the *Musical Times*. 'Mr Britten's cleverness has got the better of him.'

## 1 September 1939

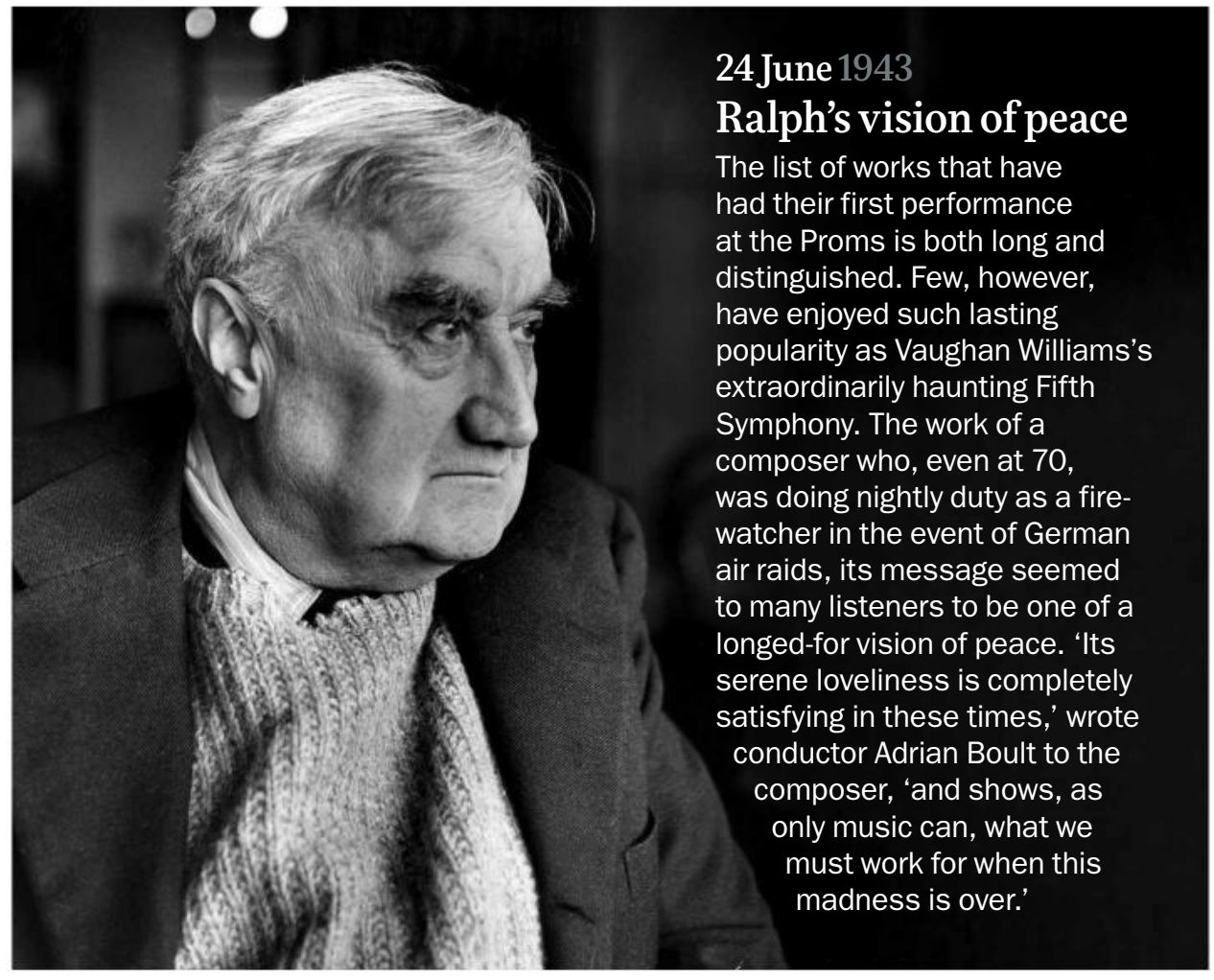
After conducting Beethoven's Second Piano Concerto and Sixth Symphony, Henry Wood announces that the rest of the Proms season is cancelled, as Britain is now at war with Germany.

## 29 June 1942

In a show of defiance against the German invasion of Russia, Shostakovich's 'Leningrad' Symphony No. 7 receives its first performance in western Europe. The score has been smuggled out of the Soviet Union on microfilm two months earlier.

## 27 June 1942
### The Beeb is back

The BBC has not been in charge of every Proms season since 1927 – on the outbreak of WWII, the corporation made the decision to leave the 1940 and '41 seasons to others as it hotfooted it out of the capital. When, with things a little quieter, it returned to the helm in 1942, a couple of notable changes had taken place. Firstly, with the Queen's Hall having been obliterated by German bombs on the night of 10 May 1941, the festival had moved to a new home at the Royal Albert Hall. Secondly, on 16 August 1941, Henry Wood – not the keenest of orators – had given the first of the conductor's speeches that would become a regular Last Night feature.



## 24 June 1943
### Ralph's vision of peace

The list of works that have had their first performance at the Proms is both long and distinguished. Few, however, have enjoyed such lasting popularity as Vaughan Williams's extraordinarily haunting Fifth Symphony. The work of a composer who, even at 70, was doing nightly duty as a fire-watcher in the event of German air raids, its message seemed to many listeners to be one of a longed-for vision of peace. 'Its serene loveliness is completely satisfying in these times,' wrote conductor Adrian Boult to the composer, 'and shows, as only music can, what we must work for when this madness is over.'

## 11 July 1943

With the government commandeering the Albert Hall for a meeting to honour China on 7 July, that evening's Prom has to be postponed four days, making this the first ever Prom to take place on a Sunday.

## 29 June 1944

As German doodlebugs fall on London, a Prom including works by Bax, Franck and Sibelius brings the regular Albert Hall season to a premature end. Operations transfer to Bedford, where Proms are performed in front of an invited audience.

## 28 July 1944

An increasingly ill Henry Wood conducts Beethoven's Seventh Symphony in his last ever Proms appearance. He dies three weeks later, aged 75.

## 1 July 1945

Back at the Albert Hall, the First Night of the Proms' 50th-anniversary season includes Walton's *Memorial Fanfare for Henry Wood* and, aptly, Elgar's *Cockaigne (In London Town)*.

## 19 July 1947

Alongside Adrian Boult and Basil Cameron, the recently knighted Malcolm Sargent conducts the First Night, beginning a close association with the Proms that will continue for 20 years.

## 12 September 1947

The BBC cameras arrive at the Albert Hall, as parts of the Last Night are televised for the first time. Many observers are sceptical, and orchestra members struggle under the heat of the TV lights.

## 16 September 1950

Now the chief conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Sargent takes solo control of the Last Night.

## 25 August 1953

Under John Barbirolli, the Hallé becomes the first orchestra from outside London to appear at the Proms. Barbirolli was at one point being eyed up as a possible chief conductor of the Proms, but chose to stay put in Manchester.

## 19 September 1953

Raucous shenanigans by the Promenaders in recent seasons – described by conductor Stanford Robinson as 'hooliganism' – lead to Henry Wood's *Fantasia on British Sea Songs* being removed from the Last Night. The decision causes an uproar.

## 27 August 1955

The Albert Hall stage has a fresh-faced look to it, as the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain performs its first ever Prom, beginning what will become a near-annual tradition.

A Prom with a view: the 1950s saw TV cameras become a regular feature at the Royal Albert Hall

## 25 July 1953
### The cameras are coming...

With the Queen's Coronation on 2 June having led to a boom in the sales of television sets across the UK, the BBC decided that now would be a good time to bring the Proms to the small screen again, beginning with the 1953 First Night. Television had a natural showman in Malcolm 'Flash Harry' Sargent, who was positive from the outset, though not everyone was so keen. Many within the BBC didn't want TV treading on radio's patch, while others worried about the impact that bulky cameras might have on the experience of concert-goers. Both debates would continue well into the 1980s.

## 17 August 1957
The BBC celebrates the tenth anniversary of the Third Programme radio station by commissioning Ibert's rowdy *Bacchanale*. The composer himself is in the audience.

## 28 August 1958
The Proms hosts its first complete Bruckner symphony since 1903, as the Hallé plays his 'Romantic' Fourth.

## 1 September 1959
In a 'Masters of the 20th century' Prom, Sargent conducts works by Sibelius, Stravinsky, Kodály and Shostakovich.

## 23 July 1960
The first Prom under the auspices of William Glock as the BBC's controller of music is rounded off by Dvořák's Symphony No. 9 'From the New World'. For some, Glock will prove to be a disruptive modernist; to others, he is a much-needed breath of fresh air.

## 31 August 1960
Janet Baker performs an aria from Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*, the first of 36 appearances from the mezzo, who goes on to become a Proms favourite.

## 28 July 1961
How to make a point? One of Glock's first commissions is Symphonies for piano, wind, harps and percussion by Elisabeth Lutyens, a ferocious critic of the 'cowpat' traditional school of English music.

## 21 August 1961
The Proms hosts its first complete opera performance, as John Pritchard conducts Mozart's *Don Giovanni* in a production brought over from Glyndebourne.

Much-loved mezzo: Janet Baker was a Proms favourite

## 14 September 1961
Robert Schumann's Second Symphony enjoys a surprisingly late Proms debut, played by the LSO under Meredith Davies.

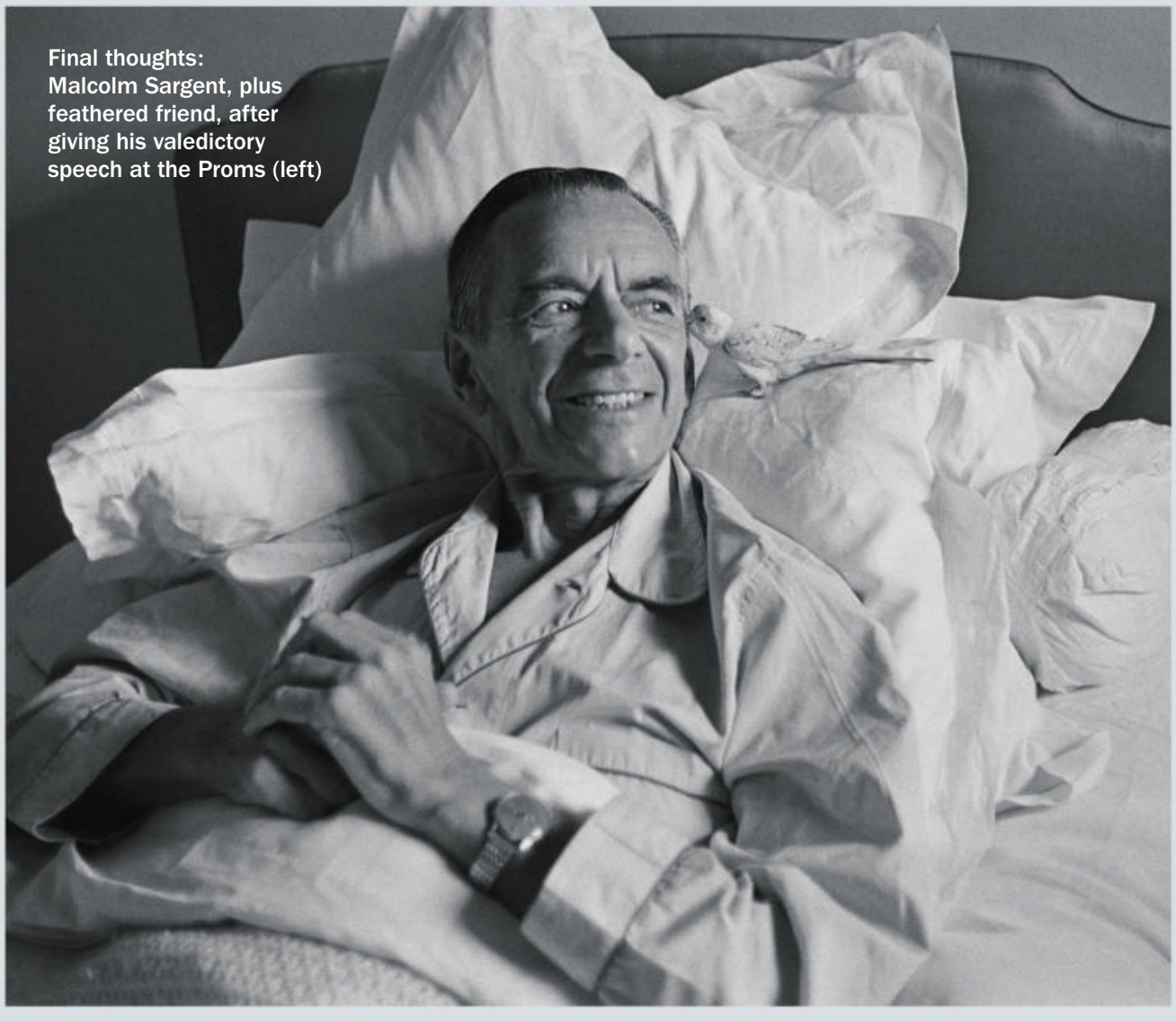
## 22 July 1963
The hegemony of British conductors at the Proms comes to an end as the Swiss Silvio Varviso takes the baton for Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. Hungary's Georg Solti and Italy's Carlo Maria Giulini follow later in the season.

## 30 July 1963
The first ever Proms performance of Mahler's Second Symphony proves such a hit that conductor Leopold Stokowski gets the LSO to play the entire final movement again as an encore.

## 1 August 1963
Fifteen months after its premiere in Coventry, Britten conducts his *War Requiem*. The soloists include soprano Heather Harper and tenor Peter Pears.

## 6 September 1963
Soprano Birgit Nilsson and bass Gottlob Frick join the party as Georg Solti leads a 150th-anniversary Wagner celebration.

GETTY, ALAMY



Final thoughts: Malcolm Sargent, plus feathered friend, after giving his valedictory speech at the Proms (left)

## 16 September 1967
### A poignant farewell

Suffering from pancreatic cancer, Malcolm Sargent was too ill to conduct any Proms in the 1967 season. Nonetheless, come the Last Night, he appeared at the Albert Hall one final time to give a speech. 'Next year, the 74th season of the Henry Wood Promenade Concerts begins on July 20th,' he told the audience. 'I've been invited to be here on that night. I have accepted the invitation.' He died on 3 October.

## 13 August 1964

Berthold Goldschmidt conducts the LSO in the world premiere of Mahler's Tenth Symphony, a work left unfinished at the composer's death but recently completed by Deryck Cooke.

## 4 September 1964

The Amadeus Quartet does its best to fill the vast spaces of the Albert Hall with a performance of the 'Emperor' String Quartet at the start of an all-Haydn Prom.

## 1 September 1965

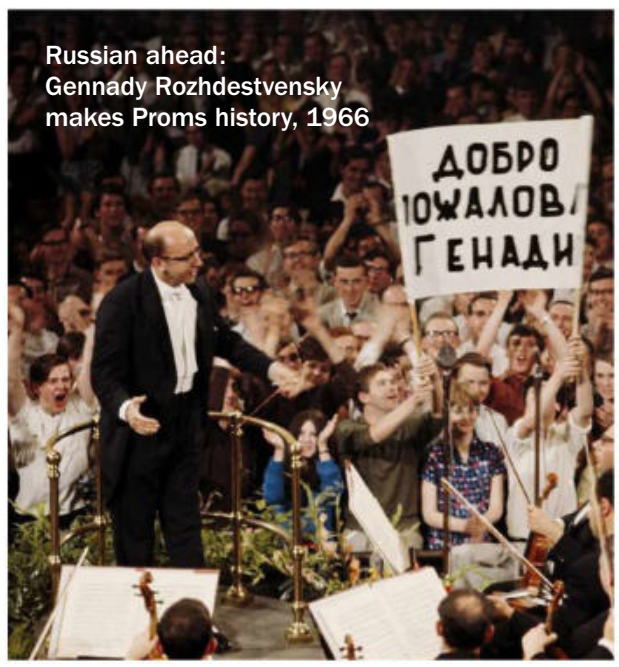
Featuring Jacqueline du Pré in Elgar's Cello Concerto, Malcolm Sargent conducts a Prom celebrating his 70th birthday (a day that actually fell back in April).

## 17 August 1966

Shostakovich, Rachmaninov and Tchaikovsky are on the bill as the Proms welcomes its first ever overseas orchestra, the Moscow Symphony, conducted by Gennady Rozhdestvensky.

## 17 September 1966

A 25-year-old Martha Argerich wows the Last Night audience with her Proms debut in Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 3. It will be another 26 years before the Argentinian makes a return visit to the festival.




Russian ahead: Gennady Rozhdestvensky makes Proms history, 1966

## 19 July 1968

The 1968 season opens with a Malcolm Sargent Memorial Prom, in which Colin Davis conducts works by Vaughan Williams, Walton and Elgar.

## 12 August 1968

After a first half featuring Thea Musgrave's Concerto for Orchestra, John Tavener's *Alium* and Don Banks's Violin Concerto, the audience is asked to vote for which work they would like to hear again after the interval. *Alium* wins by a landslide.

## 18 July 1969

Breaking with tradition, the Proms season does not open with the National Anthem. Instead, conductor Colin Davis launches straight into Berlioz's *Grande messe des morts* in a Henry Wood Centenary Prom.

## 13 August 1969

As well as championing the new, Glock shows his willingness to push the boundaries at the other end of the timeline, as the Proms welcomes music from the 14th century: Machaut's *Messe de Nostre Dame*, sung by the Ambrosian Singers.

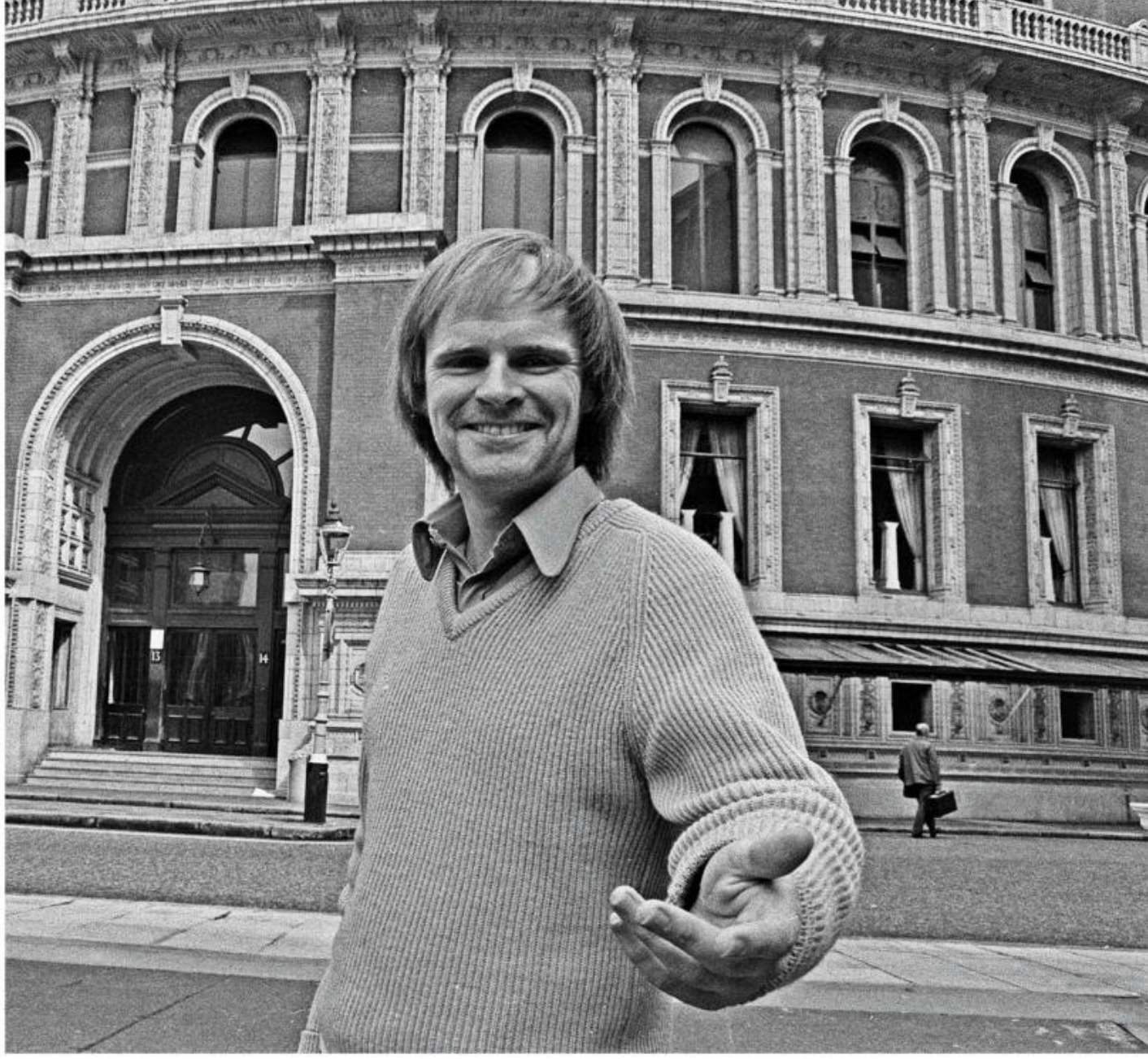
## 28 August 1969

Some things go on too long. The 40-minute premiere of Maxwell Davies's *Worldes Blis* has many audience members heading towards the bar well before the work is over. Others stick around to boo.

## 30 July 1970

Period performance pioneer David Munrow brings the Early Music Consort of London to the Proms for the first time.

Orff and on: (right) baritone Patrick McCarthy, shortly after salvaging *Carmina Burana* in 1974; (below) Russian cellist Mstislav Rostropovich



## 13 August 1970

The music carries on well towards midnight as the BBC Symphony Orchestra is joined by rock band Soft Machine for the first ever Late Night Prom. An evening of premieres includes Mike Ratledge's *Out-Bloody-Rageous*.

## 7 September 1972

The Albert Hall Arena is cleared to make room for Stockhausen's *Carré* for four orchestras. It is played once, and then again for good measure.

## 21 August 1968
## Emotions in Czech

On 20 August, Soviet tanks rolled into Prague to put a stop to liberal reforms being carried out by the Czechoslovak leader Alexander Dubček – 137 civilians were killed as the world looked on in dismay. When the USSR State Orchestra and Russian cellist Mstislav Rostropovich (above) took to the Albert Hall stage to play Dvořák's Cello Concerto the next night, the occasion was highly charged and tinged with desperate irony. 'That night will forever live in the memory of those of us who were there,' recalls cellist Julian Lloyd Webber, who was 17 at the time. 'Prague was a very important city in Rostropovich's life – he met his wife Galina there – and here he was playing *the* Czech cello concerto. The tension was extraordinary, and while the performance was not his most technically perfect, towards the end it was utterly heartbreaking. When it came to the encore, he had tears rolling down his face.'

GETTY

## 29 December 1972

Yes, you have read the date right. An all-Stravinsky concert launches an eight-day Winter Prom season, reviving a tradition abandoned earlier in the century. The revival only lasts a year.

## 4 January 1973

The Berlin Philharmonic makes its debut visit to the Proms, playing Beethoven's Fourth and Fifth Symphonies under Herbert von Karajan.

## 26 July 1974

As pre-Proms talks are introduced to the mix, the BBC Symphony Orchestra's chief conductor (and composer) Pierre Boulez leads the way, giving five during the season, including one introducing this evening's programme of Stockhausen, Berg and Wagner.

## 7 August 1974

Crisis looms when baritone Thomas Allen collapses during Orff's *Carmina Burana* but – Oh, Fortuna! – budding opera singer Patrick McCarthy steps out from the audience to take over and save the day.

## 9 August 1976

The hair is here. Simon Rattle's late night concert with the London Sinfonietta makes him, at 21, the youngest ever conductor at the Proms.

## 17 August 1977

An 88-year-old Adrian Boult conducts his 251st and last Prom, rounding off with Vaughan Williams's *Job*, a work that the composer himself had dedicated to him.

## 18 August 1979

Although the BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra's 'Viennese Night' Prom is later watched by more than five million on TV, the BBC's controller of music Robert Ponsonby decides not to repeat the format.

## 7 August 1980

After a musicians' strike has wiped out the first 19 Proms, the season gets off to a very belated start, with soprano Jessye Norman joining the BBC SO for Mahler's Fourth.

## 16 and 18 July 1982

Pleas to Ponsonby for a TV-friendly First Night fall on deaf ears, and the new season opens instead with Berlioz's *The Trojans*, divided between two Proms on Friday and Sunday. Neither are televised.

## 20 August 1984
## Odaline breaks new ground

It took nearly 90 years since Henry Wood first flourished his Proms baton, but at last the conductor's podium was filled by someone with two X chromosomes, with Odaline de la Martinez (above) stepping up to lead her own Lontano ensemble in works by Schoenberg, Gerhard and others. 'I remember contacting the BBC and suggesting I do a programme there,' de la Martinez later said in an interview. 'They agreed, and it was only a few weeks before the performance that someone said to me, "Do you realise that you are the first woman to conduct a performance at the Albert Hall?" So I rang the BBC and they confirmed it!'

## 8 September 1984
Symphonies by Mozart and Bruckner mark the Vienna Philharmonic's first visit to the Proms, under Claudio Abbado.

## 15 September 1984
The audience at the Last Night is invited to enjoy an extra-long interval so that TV viewers have time to watch *Dynasty* on BBC One before joining them for the second-half jollity at the Albert Hall.

## 14 September 1985
Last Night mezzo soloist Sarah Walker unbuttons the sleeve of her seemingly conventional white dress to reveal a Union Flag. A sartorial precedent is set.

## 24 July 1988
Leonard Bernstein is here to conduct his *Songfest.* The Prom's kick-off time is 7.30pm. Bernstein arrives at the Albert Hall at 7.28pm. And relax...

## 15 September 1990
Andrew Davis takes over the Last Night at late notice after intended conductor Mark Elder has been sent to the naughty step, sacked for questioning the suitability of singing patriotic songs in the light of the impending Gulf War.

## 10 August 1992
Performed by Evelyn Glennie, the world premiere of James MacMillan's percussion concerto *Veni, Veni, Emmanuel* proves a major hit (excuse the pun).

## 18 July 1994
At the age of 68, Queen Elizabeth II attends her first ever Prom. Her Majesty is treated to an all-British concert from the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Andrew Davis that includes Britten's Violin Concerto, performed by Ida Haendel.

## 22 July 1996
Lovers of music on a smaller scale head to the Royal College of Music on a Monday lunchtime as the new Chamber Music Proms series is launched with a performance by the Arditti Quartet. The series later finds a permanent home at nearby Cadogan Hall.

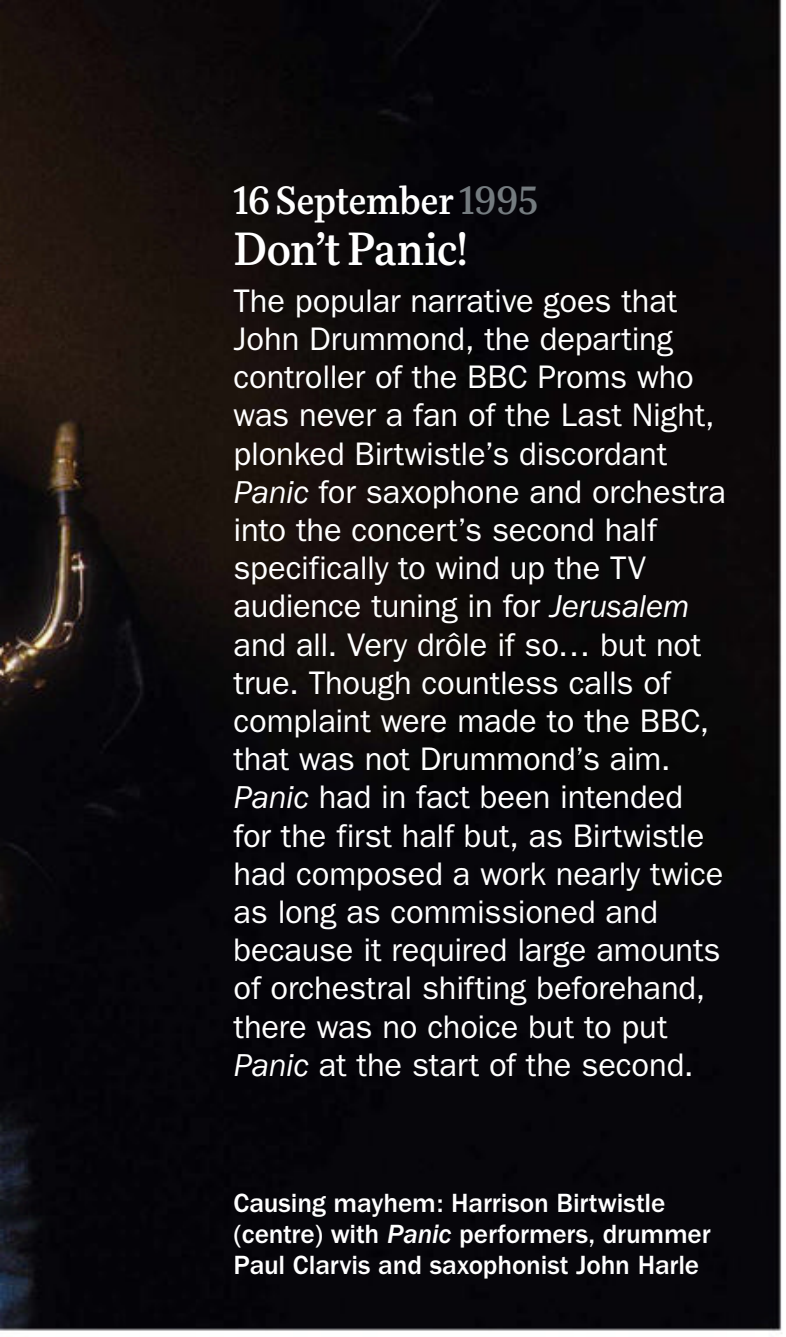
## 14 September 1996
Another Proms first, this time involving thousands of concert-goers and an open-air stage in Hyde Park. Hosted by Sheridan Morley, the debut Proms in the Park event on the Last Night proves such a success that it is soon extended to other cities across the UK.

## 10 August 1997
The Russian pianist Evgeny Kissin makes history by giving the first ever solo recital at the Proms. The seven encores that follow may well be a Proms record too...

## 17 August 1997
Westminster Abbey choristers in cassocks and ruffs, processing into the Royal Albert Hall and singing Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols* on a swelteringly hot August afternoon? Absolutely.

## 12 September 1997
A moving performance of Verdi's Requiem is dedicated to the memories of Princess Diana and Georg Solti. Tragically, Solti was himself initially scheduled to conduct the concert, but died the day before Diana's funeral. Five minutes of silence follows the performance before applause begins.

GETTY, ARENA PAL, ALAMY



## 16 September 1995
### Don't Panic!

The popular narrative goes that John Drummond, the departing controller of the BBC Proms who was never a fan of the Last Night, plonked Birtwistle's discordant *Panic* for saxophone and orchestra into the concert's second half specifically to wind up the TV audience tuning in for *Jerusalem* and all. Very drôle if so… but not true. Though countless calls of complaint were made to the BBC, that was not Drummond's aim. *Panic* had in fact been intended for the first half but, as Birtwistle had composed a work nearly twice as long as commissioned and because it required large amounts of orchestral shifting beforehand, there was no choice but to put *Panic* at the start of the second.

**Causing mayhem: Harrison Birtwistle (centre) with *Panic* performers, drummer Paul Clarvis and saxophonist John Harle**

## 10 August 1998

Simon Rattle and the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group's Late Night Prom is brought rudely to a halt by the sound of rape alarms and leaflets fluttering down from up high in the Albert Hall. The perpetrators, who are protesting against what they believe is a cabal running British music publishing, disappear anonymously into the night.

## 7 September 1998

Here's one we made earlier. Presented by Katy Hill, the first Blue Peter Prom marks the 40th anniversary of the much loved children's programme.

## 10 August 1999

And… one, two, three, kick! One, two, three, kick! The Proms premiere of Bernstein's *Wonderful Town*, starring Thomas Hampson, ends with Prommers doing a conga around the Arena.

## 19 July 2003

Readers of the *Radio Times* are invited to vote for the repertoire of the Nation's Favourite Prom. The winning works include Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*, read here by Sir David Attenborough.

## 15 September 2001
### Barber replaces Britannia

Perfected by the likes of Malcolm Sargent and Andrew Davis, the conductor's Last Night speech usually provides the chance to indulge in a few witticisms and rouse the Prommers into a state of even greater patriotic excitement. For Leonard Slatkin (above) in 2001, the task was very different. Coming just four days after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the occasion required a change of tone, not just in the speech but in the choice of music too. Out went 'Land of Hope and Glory' and 'Rule Britannia'; in came Barber's Adagio, Negro Spirituals from Tippett's *A Child of Our Time* and the final movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. 'We felt it was vital to respond to people's mood at this sombre and difficult hour,' explained Proms controller Nicholas Kenyon, 'and at the same time to show that music can affirm our shared humanity.'

## 31 August 2003

For some concert-goers, learning how to turn off a mobile phone is an intellectual challenge too far, as Simon Rattle discovers at the beginning of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. He stops the Berlin Philharmonic mid-bar, and starts the piece again.

## 16 July 2004

After two years of silence during a major revamp, the mighty Albert Hall organ is ready to play again. And how. The 2004 season opens with the thunderous sound of Bach's Toccata in D minor, played by Martin Neary, before the BBC Symphony Orchestra takes over for the Fugue, as orchestrated by Henry Wood.

**Let's shake it up: (below) Evelyn Glennie and David Attenborough at the Proms press launch in 2003; (left) 2001 Last Night conductor Leonard Slatkin**

## 3 August 2005

A family moment, as Ravi Shankar and his daughter Anoushka perform together in a concert that includes the Proms premiere of Shankar Snr's Sitar Concerto No. 1.

## 19 July 2006

Her Majesty the Queen makes a return visit to the Proms, this time for an 80th-birthday celebration. Among the works are *A Little Birthday Music* by Master of the Queen's Music Peter Maxwell Davies and Poet Laureate Andrew Motion.

## 2 August 2006

Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance* March No. 6, a work created by Anthony Payne from the composer's incomplete sketches, is given its world premiere.

## 4 September 2006

After their Beethoven Ninth Symphony Prom has been cancelled by a fire in the Albert Hall, the Philadelphia Orchestra and Christoph Eschenbach come back the next day for a second go, this time playing Beethoven's and Tchaikovsky's Fifths.

## 19 August 2007

The Albert Hall stage becomes a vibrant sea of yellow, blue and red, as Venezuela's Simón Bolívar Youth Orchestra makes its lively Proms debut under conductor Gustavo Dudamel.

## 27 July 2008

Daleks come face to face with double basses at the inaugural Doctor Who Prom. Thankfully, no viola players or trombonists are exterminated.

Closed doors and glass ceilings: (left) Covid leaves its mark; (below) Marin Alsop becomes the first woman to conduct the Last Night of the Proms

## 28 August 2020
### Nobody home

In years to come, the date will tell its own story – a Proms season beginning at the end of August, with just two weeks of concerts to follow. Audience figures for that season – zero – will also reveal that the UK was still in the grip of Covid. With no-one in the seats or the Arena to applaud, the orchestral players did their best to fill the void by clapping the soloists, but it was a sorry sound. Tasked with conducting this strangest of First Nights, Sakari Oramo (left) said he would treat the occasion as if he and the BBC Symphony Orchestra were in the recording studio. Together, they performed works that included, in the composer's 250th-anniversary year, Beethoven's 'Eroica' Symphony.

## 30 July 2011
No sooner have the daleks been repelled than the Albert Hall is invaded by Vikings, courtesy of the Horrible Histories Prom. There are also visits from Henry VIII, a caveman and Death, among others.

## 1 September 2011
Though the concert itself goes ahead, protests by the pro-Palestinian group BDS London lead to the Israel Philharmonic's Prom being taken off air.

## 13 July 2012
*BBC Music Magazine* plays its own little part in Proms history, as the 2012 season opens with Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Canon Fever*, a work commissioned by the magazine's editorial team.

## 27 July 2012
Daniel Barenboim conducts the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony before haring off and across the city to appear as one of the Olympic flag bearers at the Opening Ceremony of London 2012.

## 22 July 2013
From Olympic rings to Wagnerian ones – Barenboim returns to the Proms to conduct *Das Rheingold*, following up with the rest of the *Ring* cycle in three further concerts over six days.

## 7 September 2013
Marin Alsop is the first woman to conduct the Last Night of the Proms. 'I feel certain that Henry Wood would see this evening as a natural progression towards more inclusion in classical music,' says the American in her speech.

## 10 August 2014
As he steps onto the podium to conduct the Academy of St Martin in the Fields in Walton's *Henry V: A Shakespeare Scenario*, Neville Marriner becomes, at 90, the oldest conductor in the history of the Proms. Marriner appeared in his first Prom, as a violinist, in 1963.

## 29 July 2015
Radio 1 DJ Pete Tong hosts a late-night Ibiza Prom, bringing the Balearics party vibe to Kensington.

## 5 August 2016
In one of the great Proms encores, violinist Pekka Kuusisto marks his debut by getting the audience to join him and BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra leader Laura Samuel for a Finnish folk sing-along.

## 21 July 2019
The Sunday morning CBeebies: A Musical Trip to the Moon Prom includes *Earth*, a specially commissioned work by Oscar-winning composer Hans Zimmer, no less.

## 30 July 2021
Though the season is slightly shorter than usual and a certain level of social distancing is still in place, the Proms returns to something close to normality. Dalia Stasevska, who conducted the previous season's Last Night to an empty hall, is immediately called back to begin this year's festivities.

BBC Proms *What is your most memorable BBC Prom? Let us know at music@classical-music.com*

GETTY

KILKENNY
ARTS
FESTIVAL
04-14 August 2022
kilkennyarts.ie
IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST
Kilkenny County Council

CHELTENHAM
Music
Festival
8-16 July 2022
Box Office 01242 850270
cheltenhamfestivals.com/music
#CheltMusicFest
Featuring:
Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Anoushka Shankar & Britten Sinfonia,
Sheku & Isata Kanneh-Mason, Tenebrae, London Mozart Players, Brodsky Quartet
New English Ballet Theatre, Manchester Collective, The English Concert,
Martin James Bartlett, Ingrid Fliter, Mahan Esfahani, Samuele Telari, Laura Bowler,
Conor Mitchell, BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists and much more
Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

It's good to be back: Kwamé Ryan, seen here conducting the CBeebies Prom in 2019 returns this year for Proms 11 & 12

BBC Proms

# WELCOME TO THE PROMS

From First Night to Last, we present eight weeks of music in London's Albert Hall, Battersea Arts Centre and Printworks; plus in Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Gateshead, Glasgow, Liverpool and Truro...

**RAH** = Royal Albert Hall

**FRIDAY 15 JULY**

### PROM 1
**7.30pm-c9pm RAH**
First Night of the Proms. Verdi *Requiem*. Masabane Cecilia Rangwanasha (soprano), Jennifer Johnston (mezzo-soprano), Freddie De Tommaso (tenor), Kihwan Sim (bass-baritone), Crouch End Festival Chorus; BBC Symphony Chorus; BBC Symphony Orchestra/ Sakari Oramo

**SATURDAY 16 JULY**

### PROM 2
**6.30pm-c8:50pm RAH**
Vaughan Williams *Fantasia on a Theme* by *Thomas Tallis*, Huw Watkins *Flute Concerto*, Bax *Tintagel*, Walton *Partita for Orchestra*, Elgar *Variations on an Original Theme, 'Enigma'*. Adam Walker (flute), Sinfonia of London/John Wilson

### PROM 3
**10.30pm-c11:30pm RAH**
Radio 1 Relax at the Proms. Presented by Sian Eleri

Truly buzzing: Sally Beamish's *Hive* premieres at Prom 9

**SUNDAY 17 JULY**

### PROM 4
**7.30pm-c9.30pm RAH**
Cynthia Erivo – Legendary Voices. Celebrating legendary female singers including Nina Simone, Shirley Bassey, Billie Holiday and Gladys Knight. Cynthia Erivo (singer), BBC Concert Orchestra/ Edwin Outwater

**MONDAY 18 JULY**

### PROMS AT BELFAST
**1pm-c2pm Waterfront Hall, Studio**
Xenakis *Allegro, Akea*, Messiaen *Pièce for piano and string quartet*, Xenakis *Ittidra*, Ravel *Pavane pour un infante défunte*, Xenakis *À r. (Hommage à Ravel)*, Messiaen *Quartet for the End of Time – Louange à l'immortalité de Jésus*. Hebrides Ensemble

### PROM 5
**7.30pm-c9:40pm RAH**
JS Bach (orch. Webern) *A Musical Offering – Ricercare a 6*, Cassandra Miller *Viola Concerto* (world premiere), Bruckner *Symphony No. 6*. Lawrence Power (viola), BBC Philharmonic/ Omer Meir Wellber

**TUESDAY 19 JULY**

### PROM 6
**7pm-c8:35pm RAH**
Vaughan Williams *Symphony No. 4*, Tippett *Symphony No. 4*. BBC Philharmonic/ Omer Meir Wellber

### PROM 7
**10.15pm-c11:20pm RAH**
Purcell *Dido and Aeneas*. Alice Coote (Dido), James Newby (Aeneas), Gemma Summerfield (Belinda), Madeleine Shaw (Sorceress), Nardus Williams (Second Woman), Nicky Spence (Sailor), La Nuova Musica Choir, La Nuova Musica/ David Bates (harpsichord)

**WEDNESDAY 20 JULY**

### PROM 8
**7.30pm-c9:30pm RAH**
Jóhannsson *The Miners' Hymns – They Being Dead Yet Speaketh*, Rachmaninov *Piano Concerto No. 2*, Hildur Guðnadóttir *new work* (world premiere), Tchaikovsky *Fantasy-Overture Romeo and Juliet*. Alexander Gavrylyuk (piano), BBC Singers, BBC Symphony Orchestra/Dalia Stasevska

**THURSDAY 21 JULY**

### PROM 9
**7pm- c9:05pm RAH**
Ravel *Shéhérazade – Ouverture de féerie*, Sally Beamish *Hive* (world premiere), Rimsky-Korsakov *Scheherazade*. Catrin Finch (harp), BBC National Orchestra of Wales/ Ariane Matiakh

GETTY

FRIDAY 22 JULY

**PROM 10**
**7.30pm-c9:40pm RAH**
Music for Royal Occasions. Handel *Zadok the Priest, Water Music – excerpts,* Walton *Orb and Sceptre,* Britten *Courtly Dances from Gloriana,* Parry *I was glad*, Judith Weir *I love all beauteous things*, Vaughan Williams *Silence and Music*, Elgar *Pomp and Circumstance March No. 4*, plus works by Byrd, Ireland and Cheryl Frances-Hoad.
BBC Singers, BBC Concert Orchestra/Bramwell Tovey

SATURDAY 23 JULY

**PROMS 11 & 12**
**11am-c12pm, 3pm-c4pm RAH**
CBeebies Prom – A Journey into the Ocean. With presenters Nigel Clarke, Rory Crawford, Andy Day, Chantelle Lindsay, Maddie Moate, Puja Panchkoty, Southbank Sinfonia/ Kwamé Ryan

**PROMS AT SAGE GATESHEAD**
**7.30pm-c9.30pm**
**Sage Gateshead**
Folk Connections. John Adams *Shaker Loops, Folk music and Spell Songs*, Dvořák *Symphony No. 9 'From the New World'.* Voices of the River's Edge, Spell Songs, Royal Northern Sinfonia/Dinis Sousa

SUNDAY 24 JULY

**PROM 13**
**6.30pm-c10.20pm RAH**
Smyth *The Wreckers*. Philip Horst (Pascoe), Karis Tucker (Thirza), James Rutherford (Lawrence), Rodrigo Porras Garulo (Mark), Lauren Fagan (Avis), Donovan Singletary (Harvey), Glyndebourne Festival Opera, London Philharmonic Orchestra/Robin Ticciati

MONDAY 25 JULY

**PROMS AT TRURO**
**1pm-c2pm Hall for Cornwall**
D Scarlatti *Piano Sonatas in G, C sharp minor and C minor*, Liszt *Transcendental Études Nos 3-5*, Chopin *Piano Sonata No. 2.* Alim Beisembayev (piano)

**PROM 14**
**7.30pm-c9.40pm RAH**
Glinka *Ruslan and Lyudmila – overture*, Smyth *Concerto for Horn and Violin*, Rachmaninov *Symphony No. 2.*
Elena Urioste (violin), Ben Goldscheider (horn), City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra/Kazuki Yamada

TUESDAY 26 JULY

**PROM 15**
**7.30pm-c9:40pm RAH**
Bernstein *Candide – overture*, Walker *Variations for Orchestra*, Barber *Violin Concerto*, Tchaikovsky *Symphony No. 4.* Johan Dalene (violin), BBC Symphony Orchestra/Jordan de Souza

WEDNESDAY 27 JULY

**PROM 16**
**7.30pm-c9.40pm RAH**
Carwithen *Bishop Rock Overture*, G Williams *Sea Sketches*, Vaughan Williams *A Sea Symphony (Symphony No. 1).* Elizabeth Llewellyn (soprano), Andrew Foster-Williams (bass-baritone), BBC Symphony Chorus, BBC National Chorus of Wales, BBC National Orchestra of Wales/ Andrew Manze

THURSDAY 28 JULY

**PROM 17**
**7.30pm-c9.45pm RAH**
Jennifer Walshe *The Site of an Investigation*, Brahms *A German Requiem*. Elena Tsallagova (soprano), Shenyang (baritone), Jennifer Walshe (voice), National Youth Choir of Great Britain, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra/Ilan Volkov

FRIDAY 29 JULY

**PROM 18**
**7.30pm-c9.30pm RAH**
Bruckner (arr. Skrowaczewski) *String Quintet – Adagio*, Nicole Lizée *Blurr is the Colour of My True Love's Eyes* (European premiere), Shostakovich *Symphony No. 5*. Colin Currie (percussion), BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra/ Alpesh Chauhan

SATURDAY 30 JULY

**PROMS AT BATTERSEA**
**4pm–c5pm Battersea Arts Centre**
BBC Young Composer. New works by Chelsea Becker, Isaac Bristow, Maddy Chassar-Hesketh, Will Everitt, Theo Kendall, Daniel Liu and Jenna Stewart. BBC Concert Orchestra/Alice Farnham

**PROM 19**
**7.30pm–c9.30pm RAH**
Dukas *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, Respighi *Fountains of Rome*, Puccini *Il tabarro*. George Gagnidze (Michele), Natalya Romaniw (Giorgetta), Ivan Gyngazov (Luigi), Daniela Barcellona (La Frugola), Alasdair Elliott ('Tinca'), Simon Shibambu ('Talpa'), Jung Soo Yun (Ballad-Seller), RCM Opera Chorus, Hallé Orchestra/ Mark Elder

SUNDAY 31 JULY

**PROM 19a**
**11am–c12.35pm RAH**
Valentin Silvestrov *Symphony No. 7*, Chopin *Piano Concerto No. 2*, Beethoven *Fidelio – 'Abscheulicher!...Komm, Hoffnung, lass den letzten Stern'*, Brahms *Symphony No. 4.* Liudmyla Monastyrska (soprano), Anna Fedorova (piano), Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra/Keri-Lynn Wilson

**PROM 20**
**7.30pm–c9.30pm RAH**
Xenakis *Jonchaies*, Ravel *Piano Concerto in G*, Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*. Tom Borrow

Let's be Franck: Alina Ibragimova and Cédric Tiberghien play in Bristol on 1 August

EVA VERMANDEL, EVGENY EUTYKHOV

(piano), BBC Symphony Orchestra/Martyn Brabbins

**MONDAY 1 AUGUST**

## PROMS AT BRISTOL
**1pm–c2pm**
**St George's Bristol**
Brian *Legend*, Ysaÿe *Poème élégiaque*, Franck *Violin Sonata*. Alina Ibragimova (violin), Cédric Tiberghien (piano)

## PROM 21
**7.30pm–c9pm RAH**
Gaming Prom. Hildur Guðnadóttir/Sam Slater *Battlefield 2042 – Suite* (European premiere), Jessica Curry *Dear Esther – I Have Begun My Ascent*, Yoko Shimomura *Kingdom Hearts*, Kow Otani *Shadow of the Colossus*. Royal Philharmonic Orch/Robert Ames

**TUESDAY 2 AUGUST**

## PROM 22
**7.30pm–c9.45pm RAH**
Xenakis *O-Mega*, Shostakovich *Violin Concerto No. 1*, Beethoven *Symphony No. 5*. Patricia Kopatchinskaja (violin), Tom Service (presenter), Aurora Orchestra/Nicholas Collon

**WEDNESDAY 3 AUGUST**

## PROM 23
**11am–c11.55am RAH**
Relaxed Prom. Beethoven *Symphony No. 5*. Tom Service (presenter), Aurora Orchestra/Nicholas Collon (presenter)

## PROM 24
**7pm–c9.15pm RAH**
Caroline Shaw *Entr'acte*, Mendelssohn *Violin Concerto*, Mahler *Symphony No. 4*. Miah Persson (soprano), Clara-Jumi Kang (violin), BBC National Orchestra of Wales/Ryan Bancroft

**THURSDAY 4 AUGUST**

## PROM 25
**7.30pm–c9.55pm RAH**
Kalevi Aho *Eight Seasons (Theremin Concerto)*, Kaija Saariaho *Vista*, Shostakovich *Symphony No. 15*. Carolina Eyck (theremin), BBC Philharmonic/John Storgårds

**FRIDAY 5 AUGUST**

## PROM 26
**7.30pm–c9.45pm RAH**
Julian Anderson *Symphony No. 2 'Prague Panoramas'*, Martinů *Concerto for Two Pianos*, Rachmaninov *Symphonic Dances*. Katia and Marielle Labèque (pianos), BBC SO/Semyon Bychkov

**SATURDAY 6 AUGUST**

## PROM 27
**7.30pm–c9.35pm RAH**
Danny Elfman *Wunderkammer*, Gershwin (orch. Grofé) *Rhapsody in Blue*, Ravel *Daphnis and Chloé – complete ballet*. Simone Dinnerstein (piano), National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain/Andrew Gourlay

**SUNDAY 7 AUGUST**

## PROM 28
**3pm–c4.45pm RAH**
Mozart *The Marriage of Figaro – overture, Piano Concertos Nos 20 and 22*. Mahler Chamber Orchestra/Leif Ove Andsnes (piano)

## PROM 29
**7.30pm–c9.35pm RAH**
Mozart *Symphony No. 38 'Prague', Three Songs, Concert Aria 'Ch'io mi scordi di te?', Masonic Funeral Music, Piano Concerto No. 24*. Christiane Karg (soprano), Mahler Chamber Orchestra/Leif Ove Andsnes (piano)

**MONDAY 8 AUGUST**

## PROMS AT BATTERSEA
**1pm–c2pm**
**Battersea Arts Centre**
Mozart *Piano Trio in B flat, Piano Quartet in E flat*. Matthew Truscott (violin), Joel Hunter (viola), Frank-Michael Guthmann (cello), Leif Ove Andsnes (piano)

## PROM 30
**7pm–c9pm RAH**
Gavin Higgins *Concerto Grosso* (world premiere), Berlioz *Symphonie fantastique*. Tredegar Band, BBC National Orchestra of Wales/Ryan Bancroft

**TUESDAY 9 AUGUST**

## PROM 31
**7pm–c8.40pm RAH**
Wagner *Tannhäuser – overture and Venusberg Music*, R Strauss *Four Last Songs*, Mahler *Blumine*, Schumann *Symphony No. 4*. Louise Alder (soprano), Ulster Orchestra/Daniele Rustioni

## PROM 32
**10.15pm–c11.30pm RAH**
R Strauss (arr. A Austin) *Vienna Philharmonic Fanfare*, Berlioz (arr. G Brand) *Overture 'Le corsaire'*, Vaughan Williams (arr. Paul Hindmarsh) *Rhosymedre*, Vaughan Williams (transcr. Phillip Littlemore) *Variations for brass band*, Armengol (arr. Michael Pilley) *Brassmen's Holiday*, Philip Wilby *Euphonium Concerto – Dance (Zeibekikos)*, plus arrangements by Andrew Austin, Malcolm Bennett, Paul Saggers, Alan Catherall. Yu-Han Yang (euphonium), Tredegar Band/Ian Porthouse

**WEDNESDAY 10 AUGUST**

## PROM 33
**7.30pm–c9.50pm RAH**
R Strauss *Death and Transfiguration*, Matthew Kaner *Pearl* (world premiere), Holst *The Planets*. Roderick Williams (baritone), BBC Symphony Chorus, BBC SO/Ryan Wigglesworth

**THURSDAY 11 AUGUST**

## PROM 34
**7.30pm–c9.45pm RAH**
Anna Thorvaldsdottir *ARCHORA* (world premiere), Elgar *Cello Concerto*, Sibelius *Symphony No. 2*. Kian Soltani (cello), BBC Philharmonic/Eva Ollikainen

**FRIDAY 12 AUGUST**

## PROM 35
**7.30pm–c9.45pm RAH**
Sibelius *Tapiola*, Liszt *Piano Concerto No. 1*, R Strauss *Ein Heldenleben*. Yuja Wang (piano), Oslo Philharmonic/Klaus Mäkelä

**SATURDAY 13 AUGUST**

## PROM 36
**7.30pm–c9.50pm RAH**
Bartók *The Miraculous Mandarin – suite*, Prokofiev *Piano Concerto No. 3*, Hannah Eisendle *Heliosis* (UK premiere), Dvořák *Symphony No. 7*. Benjamin Grosvenor (piano), Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra/Marin Alsop

**SUNDAY 14 AUGUST**

## PROM 37
**11am–c12.40pm RAH**
Haydn *Symphony No. 6 'Le matin'*, Vaughan Williams *Oboe Concerto*, Kaija Saariaho *Vers toi qui es si loin*, Beethoven *Symphony No. 4*. Nicholas Daniel (oboe), Maria Włoszczowska (violin), Royal Northern Sinfonia/Dinis Sousa

## PROM 38
**7.30pm–c9.45pm RAH**
Tchaikovsky *Swan Lake – suite*, Missy Mazzoli *Violin Concerto 'Procession'*, Prokofiev *Romeo and Juliet – excerpts*. Jennifer Koh (violin), Philharmonia Orchestra/Santtu-Matias Rouvali

**MONDAY 15 AUGUST**

## PROMS AT CARDIFF
**1pm–c2pm Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, Dora Stoutzker Hall**
Ligeti *Bagatelles*, Nielsen *Wind Quintet*, Stravinsky (arr. David MAP Palmquist) *Suite No. 2*. Carion Wind Quintet

## PROM 39
**7.30pm–c9.40pm RAH**
Mark-Anthony Turnage *Time Flies*, Vaughan Williams *Tuba Concerto*, Elgar *Symphony No. 1*. Constantin Hartwig (tuba), BBC SO/Sakari Oramo

**TUESDAY 16 AUGUST**

## PROM 40
**7.30pm–c9.40pm RAH**
Copland *Appalachian Spring – suite*, Walker *Trombone Concerto*, Prokofiev *Symphony No. 5*. Peter Moore (trombone), RPO/Vasily Petrenko

**WEDNESDAY 17 AUGUST**

## PROM 41
**7.30pm–c9.40pm RAH**
Ravel *La valse*, Beethoven *Piano Concerto No. 1*, Nielsen *Symphony No. 3 'Sinfonia espansiva'*. Behzod Abduraimov (piano), Elizabeth Watts (soprano), Benjamin Appl (baritone), BBC Scottish SO/Thomas Dausgaard

**THURSDAY 18 AUGUST**

## PROM 42
**7.30pm–c9.50pm RAH**
Sibelius *Symphony No. 7*, Beethoven *Piano Concerto No. 4*, Nielsen *Symphony No. 4 'The Inextinguishable'*. Francesco Piemontesi (piano), BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra/Thomas Dausgaard

**FRIDAY 19 AUGUST**

## PROM 43
**7pm–c10.05pm RAH**

Handel *Solomon*. Iestyn Davies (Solomon), Joélle Harvey (Solomon's Queen/First Harlot), Benjamin Hulett (Zadok), Ashley Riches (A Levite), BBC Singers, The English Concert/Sofi Jeannin

**SUNDAY 20 AUGUST**

### PROM 44
**7.30pm–c9.30pm RAH**
Debussy *Nocturnes*, Smyth *Mass in D*. Nardus Williams (soprano), Bethan Langford (mezzo), Robert Murray (tenor), Božidar Smiljanić (bass-baritone), BBC Symphony Chorus, BBC Symphony Orchestra/Sakari Oramo

**SUNDAY 21 AUGUST**

### PROM 45
**11.30am–c1pm RAH**
Amaan Ali Bangash (sarod/vocals), Ayaan Ali Bangash, Amjad Ali Khan (sarod)

### PROM 46
**7.30pm–c9.40pm RAH**
Mendelssohn *'The Hebrides' Overture*, Dvořák *Violin Concerto*, Brahms *Symphony No. 3*. Augustin Hadelich (violin), WDR Symphony Orchestra Cologne/Cristian Măcelaru

**MONDAY 22 AUGUST**

### PROMS AT LIVERPOOL
**1pm–c2pm St George's Hall**
Carwithen *String Quartet No. 2*, Brahms *String Quartet in A minor, Op. 51 No. 2*. Dudok Quartet Amsterdam

### PROM 47
**7.30pm–c9.30pm RAH**
Aretha Franklin – Queen of Soul. Sheléa (singer), Jules Buckley Orchestra/Jules Buckley

**TUESDAY 23 AUGUST**

### PROM 48
**7.30pm–c9.35pm RAH**
Webern *Passacaglia Op. 1, Six Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 6* (1928 version), Debussy (arr. B Dean) *Ariettes oubliées*, Brahms *Symphony No. 2*. Siobhan Stagg (soprano), Australian World Orchestra/Zubin Mehta

**WEDNESDAY 24 AUGUST**

### PROM 49
**7pm–c8.35pm RAH**
Birtwistle *Donum Simoni MMXVIII*, Mahler *Symphony No. 2*. Louise Alder (soprano), Sarah Connolly (mezzo), CBSO Chorus, London Symphony Chorus, LSO/Simon Rattle

### PROM 50
**10.15pm– c11.30pm RAH**
Tavener *A Hymn to the Mother of God*, Tallis *Spem in alium*, MacMillan *Miserere*, Tye *Missa 'Euge bone' – Agnus Dei*, Górecki *Totus tuus*, Sheppard *Missa 'Cantate' – Agnus Dei*, MacMillan *Vidi aquam*, Byrd *Diliges Dominum*. The Sixteen/Harry Christophers

**THURSDAY 25 AUGUST**

### PROM 51
**7.30pm–c9.40pm RAH**
Lalo *Le roi d'Ys – overture*, Brahms *Violin Concerto*, Franck *Symphony*. Daniel Lozakovich (violin), BBC SO/Fabien Gabel

**FRIDAY 26 AUGUST**

### PROM 52
**7.30pm–c9.25pm RAH**
Vaughan Williams *The Lark Ascending*, Debussy *La mer*, Thomas Adès *Märchentänze*, Sibelius *Symphony No. 5*. Pekka Kuusisto (violin), Finnish Radio SO/Nicholas Collon

**SATURDAY 27 AUGUST**

### PROMS 53 & 54
**2pm–c4pm & 7.30pm–c9.30pm RAH**
Earth Prom. BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra/Ben Palmer

**SUNDAY 28 AUGUST**

### PROM 55
**11.30am–c12.55pm RAH**
Wagner *Tannhäuser – Grand March*, Franck *Grande pièce symphonique*, Alkan *Grands prélude No. 10: Scherzando*, Liszt (transcr. Laube) *Piano Sonata in B minor*. Nathan Laube (organ)

### PROM 56
**7.30pm–c9.30pm RAH**
The South African Jazz Songbook. Siyabonga Mthembu, ESKA (vocals), Theon Cross (tuba), Metropole Orkest/Marcus Wyatt

**MONDAY 29 AUGUST**

### PROMS AT BIRMINGHAM
**1pm–c2pm Bradshaw Hall**
Horovitz *Lady Macbeth – a scena*, Smyth *Lieder, Op. 4*, R Clarke *The Seal Man*, Vaughan Williams *Four Last Songs*, Errollyn Wallen *new work* (world premiere). Claire Barnett-Jones (mezzo-soprano), Simon Lepper (piano)

### PROM 57
**7.30pm–c9.30pm RAH**
JS Bach *Mass in B minor*. Rachel Redmond, Mary Bevan (soprano), Iestyn Davies (countertenor), Guy Cutting (tenor), Matthew Brook (bass), Choir & Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment/John Butt

**TUESDAY 30 AUGUST**

### PROM 58
**8pm–c9pm RAH**
Public Service Broadcasting *This New Noise* (world premiere). Public Service Broadcasting, BBC Symphony Orch/Jules Buckley

**WEDNESDAY 31 AUGUST**

### PROM 59
**7.30pm–c9.25pm RAH**
Elgar *The Dream of Gerontius*. Allan Clayton (tenor), Jamie Barton (mezzo-soprano), James Platt (bass), Hallé Choir, London Philharmonic Choir, LPO/Edward Gardner

**THURSDAY 1 SEPTEMBER**

### PROM 60
**7.30pm–c9.30pm RAH**
BBC Open Music Prom. Ruth Mariner (creative director), BBC Concert Orchestra/Kwamé Ryan

**FRIDAY 2 SEPTEMBER**

### PROM 61
**7.30pm–c9.30pm RAH**
Walker *Lilacs*, Beethoven *Symphony No. 9 'Choral'*. Nicole Cabell (soprano), Raehann Bryce-Davis (mezzo), Zwakele Tshabalala (tenor), Ryan Speedo Green (bass-baritone), Chineke! Voices, Chineke! Orchestra/Kevin John Edusei

**SATURDAY 3 SEPTEMBER**

### PROMS & THE ENO AT PRINTWORKS LONDON
**3pm–c4.15pm; 8pm–c9.15pm Printworks**
Philip Glass *Songs from Liquid Days*, *Monsters of Grace*, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *1000 Airplanes on the Roof – excerpts*, Handel *Tolomeo, Flavio, Rinaldo, Rodelinda, Amadigi – excerpts*. Anthony Roth Costanzo (countertenor), Justin Peck (choreographer), Raf Simons (costume design), English National Opera Orchestra/Karen Kamensek, dir. James Bonas

### PROM 62
**7pm–c8.25pm RAH**
Mahler *Symphony No. 7*. Berlin Philharmonic/Kirill Petrenko

### PROM 63
**10.15pm–c11.30pm RAH**
Marius Neset *Geyser* (world premiere). Marius Neset (saxophones), Ivo Neame (piano), Jim Hart (percussion), Conor Chaplin (double bass), Anton Eger (drums), London Sinfonietta/Geoffrey Paterson

**SUNDAY 4 SEPTEMBER**

### PROM 64
**11.30am–c12.55pm RAH**
Beethoven *Piano Sonatas Nos 30-32*. András Schiff (piano)

### PROM 65
**7.30pm–c9.40pm RAH**
Schnittke *Viola Concerto*, Shostakovich *Symphony No. 10*. Tabea Zimmermann (viola), Berlin Philharmonic/Kirill Petrenko

**MONDAY 5 SEPTEMBER**

### PROMS AT GLASGOW
**1pm–c2pm Stevenson Hall, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland**
Haydn *Piano Trio in G minor Hob. XV:19*, Smyth *Piano Trio in D minor*. Trio Gaspard

### PROM 66
**7.30pm–c9.30pm RAH**
Beethoven *The Creatures of Prometheus – overture*, Betsy Jolas *bTunes for Nicolas* (world premiere), Mahler *Symphony No. 1*. Nicolas Hodges (piano), BBC Symphony Orchestra/Karina Canellakis

Sparkling Ludwig: Behzod Abduraimov plays Beethoven's First Concerto, Prom 41

**TUESDAY 6 SEPTEMBER**

### PROM 67
**7.30pm–c9.50pm RAH**
Thomas Adès *Three-Piece Suite from 'Powder Her Face'*, Wynton Marsalis *Violin Concerto*, Britten *Four Sea Interludes*, Bernstein *Symphonic Dances from 'West Side Story'*. Nicola Benedetti (violin), Royal Scottish National Orchestra/Thomas Søndergård

**WEDNESDAY 7 SEPTEMBER**

### PROM 68
**11am–c12pm RAH**
Relaxed Prom. Nicola Benedetti (violin/presenter), Royal Scottish National Orchestra/Thomas Søndergård

### PROM 69
**7pm RAH**
Beethoven *Missa solemnis*. Lucy Crowe (soprano), Ann Hallenberg (mezzo), Giovanni Sala (tenor), William Thomas (bass), Monetverdi Choir, Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique/John Eliot Gardiner

**THURSDAY 8 SEPTEMBER**

### PROM 70
**7.30pm–c9.25pm RAH**
Barber *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*, Valerie Coleman *This Is Not a Small Voice*, Beethoven *Symphony No. 3 'Eroica'*. Angel Blue (soprano), Philadelphia Orchestra/Yannick Nézet-Séguin

**FRIDAY 9 SEPTEMBER**

### PROM 71
**7.30pm–c9.40pm RAH**
Rachmaninov *The Isle of the Dead*, Chausson *Poème*, Saint-Saëns *Introduction and Rondo capriccioso*, Price *Symphony No. 1*. Lisa Batiashvili (violin), Philadelphia Orch/Nézet-Séguin

**SATURDAY 10 SEPTEMBER**

### PROM 72
**7.15pm–c10.15pm RAH**
Last Night of the Proms 2022. James B Wilson *1922* (world premiere), Coleridge-Taylor (arr. Parkin) *Deep River*, Wagner *Tannhäuser – 'Dich, teure Halle'*, Mascagni *Cavalleria rusticana – Easter Hymn*, Verdi *Macbeth – 'Vieni! t'affretta!'*, Carwithen *Overture 'ODTAA'*, Davydov *At the Fountain*, Wood *Fantasia on British Sea-Songs*, Arne *Rule, Britannia!*, Elgar *Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1*, Parry *Jerusalem*, Arr. Britten *The National Anthem*, Trad. *Auld Lang Syne*. Lise Davidsen (soprano), Sheku Kanneh-Mason (cello), BBC Singers, BBC Symphony Chorus, BBC SO/Dalia Stasevska

> As interpreters we are obliged to serve the music, regardless of how tempting it is to dazzle large audiences

THE BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE INTERVIEW

# Gidon Kremer

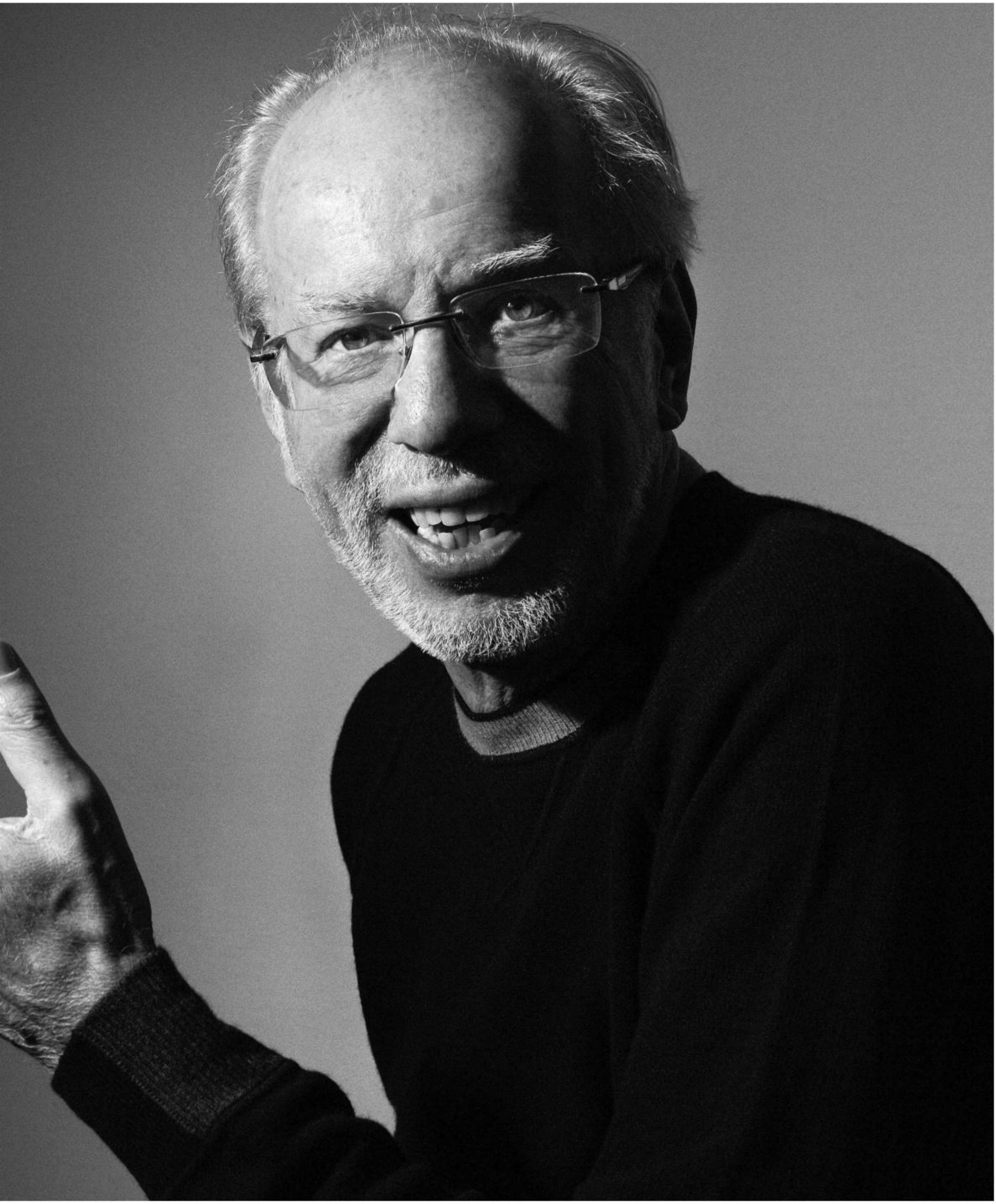
In February, the Latvian violinist celebrated his 75th birthday. In conversation with **Charlotte Smith**, he talks about his dedication to modern composers, especially Weinberg

PHOTOGRAPHY: ANGIE KREMER

Gidon Kremer hasn't always been an advocate for Mieczysław Weinberg. Despite dedicating much of his time and energy to performing and recording the Polish composer's works in recent years, the celebrated Latvian violinist wasn't entirely convinced of Weinberg's genius initially. 'I recognised the power and weight of his music much too late,' he admits ruefully. 'I attended some of his performances and was presented with the possibility of speaking to him while I was studying in Moscow, but I didn't use that opportunity, as at the time I was more interested in exploring the avant-garde. Weinberg's music seemed to me too classic, too Soviet.'

It was with a very different attitude that Kremer celebrated his 75th birthday earlier this year, however – with a new album of Weinberg's Sonatas for Solo Violin on ECM, recorded live in 2013 and in studio sessions in 2019. And he enthusiastically explains that his Weinberg phase is far from over. 'I am still full of Weinberg, in the same way that ten or 15 years ago I was full of Piazzolla – and before that Schnittke and Gubaidulina. He was, remains and will always be one of the major composers of the 20th century. He is often considered a secondary composer to Shostakovich – and the two were very close, often comparing scores – but each of them has their own distinct musical signature, and Weinberg's music is incredibly personal.'

Certainly, a defining characteristic of the composer is the incredible technical difficulty of his works. Written in 1964, '67 and '79, the three solo violin sonatas feature a range of dissonant double stops, played at full throttle by Kremer, in addition to dramatic leaps, lean wispy textures, and delicate harmonics. To take on such repertoire is not, perhaps, the natural choice of a musician in his 70s, but Kremer has always considered it his duty 'to support the creativity of our time'.



## An enduring friendship

*Shostakovich and Weinberg*

At the outbreak of the Second World War, Mieczysław Weinberg, a Polish composer of Jewish descent, fled to the USSR, where he met Dmitri Shostakovich, who became a close friend and colleague (both pictured above). Weinberg was profoundly affected by this initial meeting and would later describe it 'as if I had been born anew'.

It was at Shostakovich's urging that Weinberg moved to Moscow in 1943. But in 1948, several of his works were banned and his father-in-law, the renowned Jewish actor Solomon Mikhoels, was murdered on Stalin's order (as part of his plan to liquidate Jewish culture). Over the next five years, Weinberg himself was a target of Soviet agents and in 1953 he was arrested on charges of 'Jewish bourgeois nationalism'. Shostakovich wrote to the authorities on his behalf and offered to look after his daughter if his wife was also arrested, but Weinberg was saved by Stalin's death the following month.

Thereafter he continued to compose and to speak with Shostakovich daily. His works feature a number of explicit references to his mentor: his 12th Symphony is dedicated to Shostakovich and quotes from a number of his friend's works. The admiration was mutual, and Shostakovich likewise drew inspiration from Weinberg, dedicating his Tenth String Quartet to the younger man. There were general stylistic similarities, too, though both composers maintained highly distinctive individual voices.

**Living in the present: (right) Gidon Kremer performing live with his Kremerata Baltica, 2016; (far right) Kremer immediately after the Concert for Peace in Taormina, Italy in support of Ukraine**

Despite a career that began in the most traditional of ways – studies with David Oistrakh at the Moscow Conservatory, followed by back-to-back competition wins at the 1969 Paganini and 1970 Tchaikovsky – Kremer's dedication to modern and contemporary composers has taken him on paths less travelled. A weighty proportion of his staggering 120-odd albums on Deutsche Grammophon, Philips, EMI, Decca, ECM and Nonesuch are dedicated to names such as Schnittke, Pärt, Gubaidulina, Silvestrov, Nono, Vasks, Adams and Glass. Equally, new music lies at the heart of his eponymous Kremerata Baltica chamber orchestra, founded in 1997, and Lockenhaus Festival, which he directed for 30 years before handing the reins to cellist Nicolas Altstaedt in 2011.

In Weinberg, though, he has found an especially meaningful connection, as the Jewish composer's flight from war and persecution in Poland during the Second World War mirrors that of Kremer's own father. 'Weinberg's is a very sad voice,' he says, 'but it's this that attracts me to his music. You can feel the tragedy that he lived through – and it's the same tragedy that my father suffered when 35 of his relatives, including his first wife and daughter, were murdered in a ghetto in Riga. Weinberg fled to the USSR from Warsaw and lost many of his relatives too.'

Given their personal correlation, it's little wonder that Kremer takes great pleasure in promoting the composer's numerous symphonic, chamber, operatic and vocal works. He goes so far as to compare the violin sonatas favourably not only with Bartók's Sonata for Solo Violin, but with Bach's Sonatas and Partitas, 'Himalayas of violin music' though they are. 'I'm not afraid to make such a comparison as the Weinberg sonatas are monuments of fantastic, compact writing. Despite their technical complexity, I wouldn't miss a bar of them as they are multidimensional musical statements. So, it was logical for me to learn them, though I admit it was a challenge at my age!'

It's not the only time the subject of age comes up during our interview – of little surprise, of course, considering the 75-year milestone that Kremer reached in February. But the violinist seems as busy and curious as ever: in addition to his

continuing Weinberg fixation, he's keen to return to explorations of Mozart – the violin sonatas, given that he has recorded the concertos twice – and Beethoven's late string quartets and piano trios. He is at pains to stress, though, that this 'doesn't mean I will forget about serving contemporary composers', particularly with his Kremerata Baltica.

Directing the orchestra means he can surround himself with 'so many open-minded young players, which is the best gift I could give to myself when I was 50 and I'm still enjoying it now that I'm 75.' It's a source of some pride, in fact, that 'now the orchestra has been running for 25 years, only four of the original members have remained with the group. So it remains an orchestra where the average age of the players is around 30.'

Which lessons does he hope to impart to the young musicians? 'I have always tried to share the importance of advancing and expanding the repertoire,' he says. 'I want to pass on my dreams, my tastes and my knowledge to the next generation. And I am happy to say that today's Kremerata

is still full of freshness.' For the group's latest project, *Eine (andere) Winterreise*, he has asked a number of contemporary composers to orchestrate songs from Schubert's famous cycle for the ensemble, and he hopes to perform these at festivals throughout the summer.

It's a typically innovative project from a musician who does have some concerns about the music industry in the 21st century. 'The industry these days is often more interested in quantity than in quality,' he begins carefully. 'And surface is sometimes considered more important than the underlying message. There are so many wonderfully talented young musicians, but some, in their haste to achieve success, apply a copy and paste method to their interpretations rather than thinking deeply about the works for themselves. They are tempted by dazzling large audiences rather than serving the music itself. I think as interpreters we are obliged to serve the music, regardless of how successful this approach may be.'

This does not, however, diminish his admiration for the many young players 'who work so hard to say something personal in their interpretations and to develop an individual signature.' And he's eager to point out that 'there are plenty of good musicians nowadays, just as there were when I was a young violinist.'

## 'I have always shared the value of advancing and expanding the musical repertoire'

Certainly, many of these young musicians have been found at Kremer's Lockenhaus Festival at one time or another in the 41 years since the Austrian chamber event was established as 'a home with open doors' in 1981. The sheer variety of performers and composers associated with the festival is apparent on ECM's *Edition Lockenhaus* box set, which was reissued in March this year in celebration of Kremer's birthday, and features illustrious names such as Khatia Buniatishvili, Gérard Caussé, Thomas Demenga, David Geringas, Heinz Holliger, Kim Kashkashian, Thomas Zehetmair, Tabea Zimmermann and Simon Rattle.

Fundamentally different from more conventional classical festivals, Lockenhaus quickly became a gathering point for young musicians eager to pool their energies, skills and knowledge, and the box set is particularly interesting considering the opportunity it allows to hear some of the world's finest chamber music players relatively early in their careers. 'I have learnt so much from the partnerships established with the hundreds of great musicians who visited,' says Kremer. 'And I don't want to sound like I'm name-dropping,' he caveats with a self-deprecating laugh, 'but most of my friends and colleagues who visited the festival were and are great artists.'

It's typical of Kremer's humble attitude to his artistry that the composer's voice remains at the heart of his artistic mission – and as our interview draws to a close, he expresses a new desire to seek out Ukrainian composers in response to the country's bombardment by Russian forces. 'What's happening in the world at present is so appalling, so I want to support the Ukrainian people with my violin and musicianship, at least a little bit,' he says. 'We must support the country's musicians, artists and culture, and in my small way I'd like to do that by promoting Ukrainian music.' If his success in promoting the works of Weinberg is anything to go by, we should all expect to be introduced to some of the country's leading contemporary voices in the coming months and years.

GETTY

# The theory of relativity

## Over the past 100 years, string playing style and technique has gone through significant changes; Ariane Todes reviews the current trends

When you think of your ideal violin sound – one you would be happy to be stranded on a desert island with for all eternity – what comes to your mind's ear? I was brought up on the golden caramel of Itzhak Perlman and the brassy perfection of Jascha Heifetz. Later I discovered the more fragile beauty of Fritz Kreisler and Joseph Szigeti. In recent years, it seems that sound worlds have become more diverse and even extreme, with airier, delicate colours and textures at one end and sustained intensity at the other. How have these developments come about

and what are the implications?

Perhaps the greatest influence has been the period performance movement, as violinist and pedagogue Antje Weithaas explains: 'It started to change with historically informed players and Nikolaus Harnoncourt. You could hear how it was possible to play in a different way that was more fitting to the style. It gives us so many more colours and possibilities of expression. Every composer needs a different sound, a different approach. Our job is to be so flexible that we can adjust to the language of the composer.'

There seems to be a more exploratory sense

A touch of wobble: most violinists today use vibrato sparingly, but Leopold Mozart (below left) encouraged its use

Past and present: Fritz Kreisler, whose playing was a gold standard in his time; (below) violinist Levon Chilingirian

of what sound can be. Viktoria Mullova, who was brought up in the Russian school but now crosses between Baroque and modern set-up says, 'There are so many nuances and subtleties in music making. It's about pressure, speed of the bow, how much vibrato you use, how fast vibrato is, how much you turn the bow, how much hair goes on the string. There are so many little things to play with. When I practise, I experiment and make the phrase alive and then I change my mind the next day. It's a constant change and it's much more interesting.'

The best period performance bands and players have brought a fresh sound to composers we thought we knew, through understanding how the original instruments were played. Inevitably, however, some people have taken it too far. Alfred Brendel describes the extreme version: 'It is distinguished by very little vibrato, if any, producing a painfully artificial, lifeless sound on long, sustained notes, averse to any cantabile. For quite a few players this has become standard practice in *pianissimo* sections. The sound, instead of ominous or mysterious, becomes dead. What is lost in this kind of playing is a great deal of warmth, colour, character and nuance. Until the day before yesterday, string players as well as singers made use of various kinds of vibrato – faster and slower, wider and narrower. Fast vibrato seems to have become extinct.'

> If you spend time playing in halls unsuitable for the music, perhaps you are forced to develop ways of playing which are almost unnatural

This style is not even historically accurate, as Robin Michael, cellist in period orchestra Les Siècles, points out: 'People have this idea that period instrument specialists play with no vibrato, but it's not true. The most important document we have is the treatise from Leopold Mozart. He talks about vibrato as being first and foremost to help the resonance of stopped notes and says that it can also be used as an expressive tool. There's still this idea that when you play Bach, you shouldn't use vibrato. It's nonsense. Sound should never be dead unless it's a very specific effect that the composer wants.'

At the other end of the sonic spectrum is a sound that can be too present. Violinist Levon Chilingirian, whose quartet celebrated 50 years in 2021, describes the trend in chamber music: 'There's a much more liberal use of the bow, and a sort of wall-to-wall legato, a sound that doesn't breathe, which has become more prevalent.'

GETTY

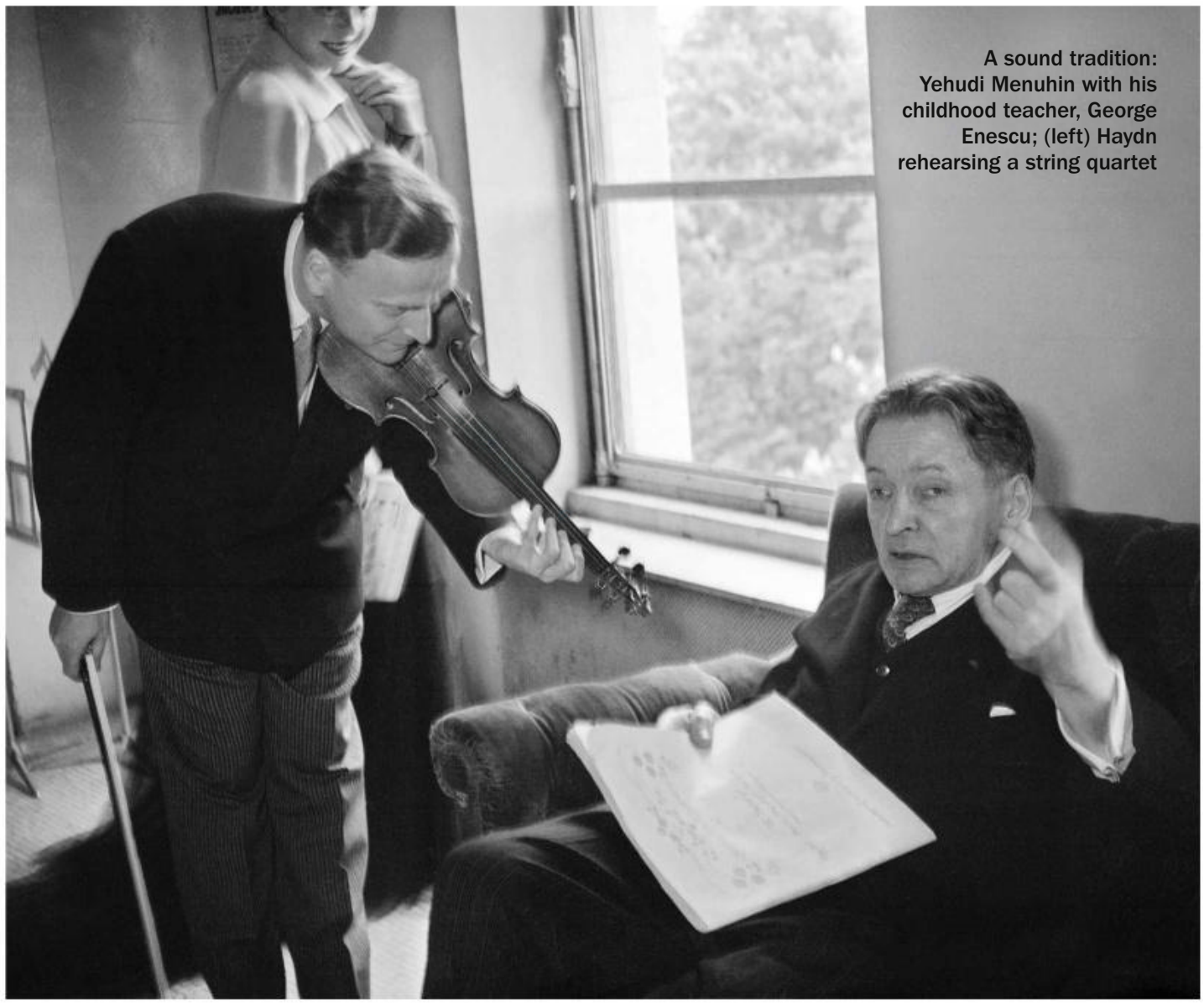
## Historical awareness

*Examining the evidence*

Many historically informed performance (HIP) practices have become mainstream. Yet, Alfred Brendel suggests, several of its 'norms' are not fully supported by the evidence: 'Some players give the impression that a public decree was issued somewhere around 1801 which prescribes employing vibrato and playing on steel strings. Beethoven was Haydn's and Mozart's younger contemporary. The Schuppanzigh Quartet had already played for Haydn before being at Beethoven's service. The development of string playing and string instruments from the Baroque into the 19th century was very gradual.'

Levon Chilingirian is wary about modern Urtext editions: 'You get squeaky-clean editions where there are many possibilities for unnatural playing. The quartet players who made editions 120 years ago knew Brahms. They couldn't all have been wrong with their bowings because they probably played to Brahms.'

For Antje Weithaas, HIP is now less doctrinaire: '70 years ago, there was a dogma about what was allowed or not, but now these ensembles all play differently, which is probably how it was in every city 300 years ago. Every city had a different musical approach.'



A sound tradition: Yehudi Menuhin with his childhood teacher, George Enescu; (left) Haydn rehearsing a string quartet

He relates this to the necessity of filling bigger halls, particularly for quartets who might be more at home in smaller venues: 'The more famous a group becomes the larger the halls they are touring in, and they have to develop a bigger way of playing, which goes against the music of the great masters. It's not designed for these huge halls that we play in. If you're spending most of your time playing in halls that don't help you, perhaps you are forced to develop ways of playing which are almost unnatural.'

Is it possible that some of the more extreme new sound worlds aren't only driven by musical considerations? Brendel suggests so: 'There has been a very strong generation of mainly female violinists and brilliant string quartets with whom to compete would have been a tall order. Why not do something essentially different? Something the older generations of players have not done? And isn't it desirable for the younger players to present a markedly different approach anyway? There is the danger of mistaking musical performance for a series of fashion shows where the newest brands are presented and eagerly absorbed.'

With streaming services and the internet offering us constant, unlimited choice, maybe there are commercial needs, too. 'For younger generations,' says Weithaas, 'it's hard to find a place in the market, so they try to be extreme.'

Chilingirian understands the urge to be different, and doesn't mind as long as it is done well: 'It's natural for the young ones to say, "Let's do something new, let's do it our own way." If they are musical, whatever they do, even if it's weird, I would respect it because I can feel that they feel the music.'

To what extent is sound defined by teaching? Chilingirian reflects: 'I thought I could recognise the Menuhin sound instantly, until the first time I heard a recording of Enescu play, and then I realised Menuhin sounded a lot like Enescu, and Enescu was his teacher.' Having said that, he recalls his own teacher, Manoug Parikian: 'He managed to produce me, Irvine Arditti and Monica Huggett, and look how differently we turned out. He was saying the same thing to all of us. A good teacher tries to develop different talents in different directions, and not to impose their own personality.'

This is also something Weithaas tries to achieve in her teaching: 'Very often, young players start to play too loudly, with too much pressure, because they want to create a big sound, but for everyone, there is a way of producing a natural sound. It has to do with the right arm, but also the position of the instrument, the use of breathing and the whole body. If they achieve the right balance, everyone can create their own unique sound.'

Taking a view: Antje Weithaas looks beyond Kreisler; (below) Alfred Brendel longs for character and nuance

There are gaps in today's teaching, though, according to Robin Michael. 'People have lost the art of how to play proper legato with the bow, which is why they rely on the left hand,' he reasons. 'There's so little attention paid to how we construct and inflect phrasing with the bow. People often fall back on thinking of the long line and vibrating on every note to get to the end point, ignoring all the different harmonic inflections. These things aren't talked about enough at conservatoire.'

As for my own love of Kreisler? For some, that type of sound is now seen as archaic. 'I hear discussions about "beautiful violin sound", but what is that?' asks Weithaas. 'Nobody can explain it. Is it what we have in our ears from the past? Is it Kreisler? It was beautiful for him and for his time, but is it always fitting to the pieces?'

Michael agrees, and looks to something much older: 'People talk of having an expensive sound, but I don't care about that. The golden age for me would have been people like Spohr, Romberg and Duport, not the post-Second World War Kreisler school. I love listening to Kreisler, but he initiated the style of vibrating on every note, and it would have been alien for Brahms to hear his music played like that.'

Chilingirian disputes the idea that older generations of players paid no respect to the past: 'I would contest the fact that the great older quartets were not as technically or as musically good. They were just as good and much more musically informed than many of today's groups.' He also suggests that some extremes may sometimes be a distraction: 'A really original musical personality of the Amadeus Quartet or Fritz Kreisler now seems to be substituted with false musical statements, with a lot of musicians – including quartets, but others as well – pulling things about too much.'

> Historically informed string players who use very little, if any, vibrato produce an artificial, lifeless sound

So it seems that along with the sonic changes brought about by increased historical awareness a schism has developed: on the one hand, a belief that the ideal sound is relative, defined by the composer and their era; on the other, that great players can and should have their own personality, which comes through their sound. An analogy might be the difference between great actors who carefully transform themselves into each role through their gestures, voice, make-up and even weight, and those who invariably look and sound the same – their personalities are compelling, yet they are never not themselves.

Maybe Kreisler playing Beethoven does sound like Kreisler playing Kreisler. I will always love his sound, whatever he plays, just as much as I love hearing good period players don their mantels. I hope there will always be room for both approaches.

GETTY, GIORGIA BERTAZZI

A sporting chance: Llinos Owen (behind the No. 6) has rebuilt her life through kayaking

# Survival and revival

## Despite life-changing injuries, Llinos Owen holds a top orchestral post while pursuing an elite sport, as she explains to Rachel Rowntree

Most musicians have a pretty standard checklist when setting off on tour, the essentials being instrument, passport and concert clothes. For bassoonist Llinos Owen, the list looks rather different. To the above add a kayak, a walking stick and, at times, a wheelchair.

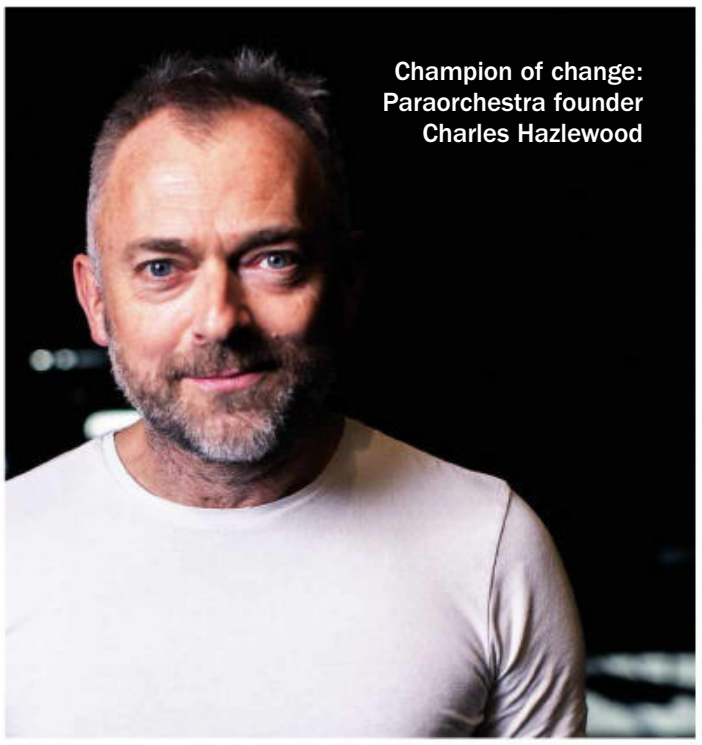
In 2009 a dramatic car accident left Owen with life-altering injuries. Thirteen years on, in the spring of this year, she became sub-principal bassoon with Welsh National Opera (WNO). When not performing, she trains with the British Paracanoe Team, competing at an international level. I ask how she juggles the demands of working at the top of her musical game while being an elite athlete.

Life changing: Llinos Owen's pelvis was shattered in a car accident

'I've got better at using the title "elite athlete", but I still feel the need to put those inverted commas around it!' Owen laughs, as we speak over Zoom. Attired in the British Canoeing Team training kit, her intelligence, wit and energy leap out of the screen. It is hard to imagine this same person was hit by a car at 50mph, leaving her with a shattered pelvis, six broken ribs, a broken collarbone and a punctured lung. 'I am very lucky to be here at all,' she reflects.

It was the shattered pelvis that left her disabled, unable to walk or stand for more than

Double reed, double life: bassoonist Llinos Owen; (below) training as an elite para-kayaker



Champion of change: Paraorchestra founder Charles Hazlewood

ten minutes at a time. 'Kayaking is great for me, as it's sitting down,' she tells me; 'the thing that's made it such a big part of my life, and something I do as a semi-professional, is that it's a Paralympic sport.'

A musician's schedule can be gruelling: long rehearsals, late-night finishes and long stretches away from home. Yet, within this demanding schedule, Owen carves out time to train. Taking up the full-time post with WNO has meant reducing her training hours, but she still fits in five to ten sessions a week. Being based at the Millennium Centre with WNO is both incredibly convenient and inspiring for her: 'We train on the River Taff, from Cardiff Bay and up past the Principality Stadium, so I really enjoy that.'

During the rehearsal period for an opera, she trains before or after work, or can sometimes even squeeze in a gym session in her lunch break. The WNO's touring schedule is also conducive to her training. 'We only do evening shows, so I can train during the day. If I'm performing, say in Cardiff or Nottingham, I'll train with a coach. But if I'm in Llandudno or Plymouth, for example, I might take my boat with me.'

Owen is convinced the music and sport in her life complement each other. 'You appreciate the value of practice, of incremental changes and ingraining physical patterns,' she says. 'You have to be able to kayak at 60 beeps per minute if you want to be able to do it at 120. That concept is really familiar to musicians.' The many years she has spent being taught the bassoon have also clearly influenced the kind of pupil she aspires to be on the water. 'We've all had those pupils who practise really, really hard, but they still sound really terrible. I don't want to be one of those for my coaches!' she chuckles.

> With music, you're thrown into the world and left to your own devices. With sport, there's a massive support network around you all the time

Having the opportunity to be coached at an elite level has made Owen appreciate the level of support athletes receive. 'With music, you have your teachers at college, then you're kind of thrown into the world and left to your own devices. With sport, there's a massive support network around you all the time,' she says. As well as her coach, the team that prepares Owen to compete internationally includes a specific strength and conditioning coach, a sports psychologist and someone on hand with whom she can discuss lifestyle balance.

It is still rare to see disabled musicians in professional symphony orchestras. Charles Hazlewood, founder and conductor of the Paraorchestra, is delighted to hear about Owen's new WNO post. 'It's great news!' he exclaims. Though on a more sobering note he adds, it's 'very, very rare' that a professional musician with a disability is integrated into an orchestra.

This certainly tallies with Owen's own experience. 'Disability in the professional world is tough,' she admits. 'Fronts of houses often have great disabled facilities. Backstage? Not so much.' The backstage of one British theatre has toilet facilities three floors away from the pit, with no disabled access. Shockingly this is not unusual. One year this meant Owen was forced to give up a patch of work. She had recently completed one of the regular pain clinic treatments she requires, and being in a venue with access issues just wasn't possible.

It becomes abundantly clear during our conversation that good management of her disability is a game changer. 'My disability doesn't impact my ability as a bassoon player. But it impacts all the other things around that – having to carry instruments a long way,

PAUL BLAKEMORE

From bow to snow: Vanessa-Mae

Water musician: Llinos Owen is on the British Paracanoe Team

## Making tracks

*Three sporting musicians*

Music and sport don't always go together – particularly if you're trying to avoid injuring those precious hands and fingers. But a small group of leading musicians can also count themselves as very fine athletes.

Multi-million-selling violinist **Vanessa-Mae** became a Winter Olympian at the age of 35, having skied since the age of four. She competed for Thailand in the women's giant slalom at Sochi 2014 under the name Vanessa Vanakorn – but finished last of the 67 competitors who made it to the end of the course.

Chineke! director **Chi-Chi Nwanoku** was on track to become an Olympic sprinter before a knee injury prompted her to take up the double bass. 'I was doing 11.8 seconds for the 100 metres. And I was 17 then, so I was definitely heading for the Montreal Olympics [in 1976],' she explains.

Then there's double bassist **Leon Bosch** who, shortly before his 50th birthday, began running half marathons, then marathons and finally ultramarathons. In 2017, at 56, he completed the 86-mile two-day Ridgeway Challenge in 21 hours and 34 minutes, winning a silver medal.

GETTY

or walking from venue to venue. It's pretty simple – if I'm in less pain I can concentrate on playing well.' Lamentably, she has worked with ensembles where it wasn't well managed. With WNO, however, she is delighted: 'One of the reasons I was confident I wanted this job was my experience on tour with them. They've obviously had all the disability training. They're so on it! They know what my limitations are, and they make sure they are provided for.'

> 'My disability doesn't impact my ability as a bassoon player, but all the things around it'

Talking to Owen highlights an issue that needs urgent reappraisal in the freelance sector of the music industry. Within a few weeks of starting with WNO, she was able to note on her intake form the reasonable adjustments she requires. These include ensuring she has parking close to venues, and making sure a wheelchair will be available to her at airports. For many freelancers, though, there is a culture of fear around asking for such adjustments. She describes how when freelancing she would worry about asking for a wheelchair at airports, concerned it might add an 'administrative burden' for the management. There is still a stigma around disability she feels, a 'feeling that we're a nuisance'. The fact her disability is not always visible can make it hard for people to understand, too. 'You can't tell I'm disabled because I don't always walk with a stick and I only sometimes need a wheelchair.'

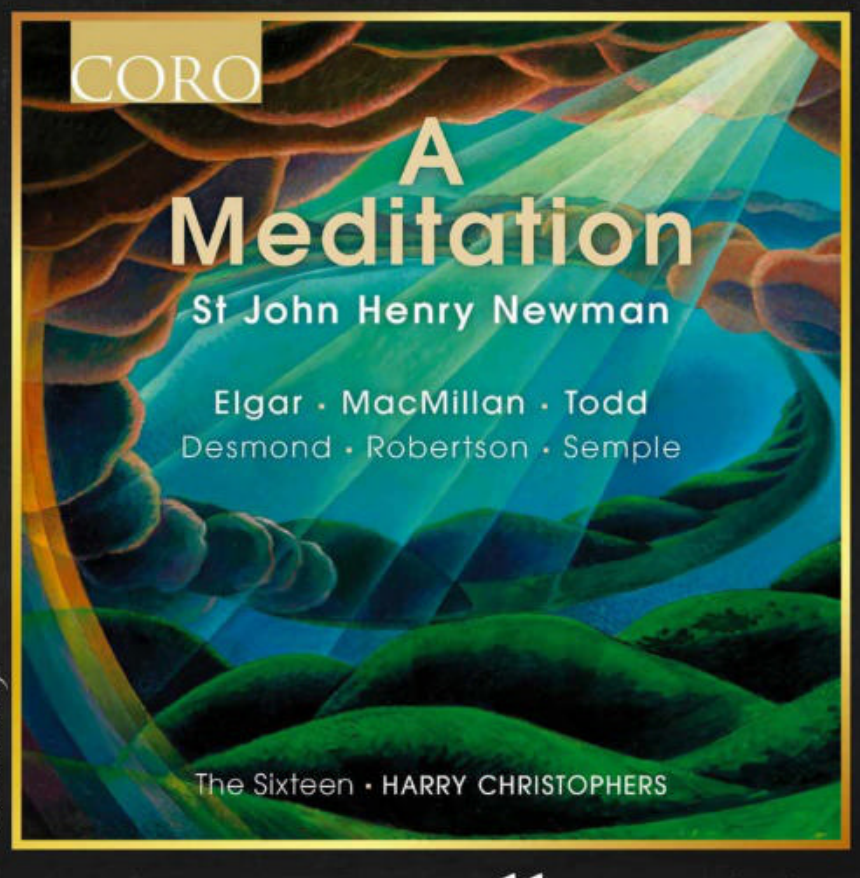
In the UK there are virtually no statistics about how many professional musicians are employed who identify as disabled. It is thought this is due, in part, to musicians' fear of not being booked if they need extra adjustments. Charles Hazlewood backs this up. 'We've seen that loud and clear. A good half of the last 12 musicians we took on after our last audition round had never come out in public about their disability. They'd soldiered on, obsessed that if they let out of the bag their particular challenges or differences, their work would dry out. It's awful,' he tells me.

From the outside, a top bassoon job and a place in the British Paracanoe Team can seem very glamorous. Owen reminds me, though, of the sheer hard grind it takes to be an elite athlete. 'There's not a week that goes by in training when I haven't either been sick or cried! I've had real crises of self-belief, asking myself whether this is all worth it.' The hard grind, though, is paying off. Shortly after starting the job with WNO, she completed trials and was selected to represent Great Britain in this year's Paracanoe World Cup in Poznań, Poland.

Towards the end of our interview, Owen tells me, with her unswerving optimism and honesty, 'I firmly believe it's not the cards you're dealt but how you play them. Considering the accident happened, which is awful, I'm very proud of the way I've dealt with it.' Proud she should be. Both a top-flight musician and an elite para-athlete, she has not simply survived – she is thriving.

CORO

The Sixteen
HARRY CHRISTOPHERS




COR16191

Elgar • MacMillan • Todd
Desmond • Robertson • Semple
www.thesixteenshop.com

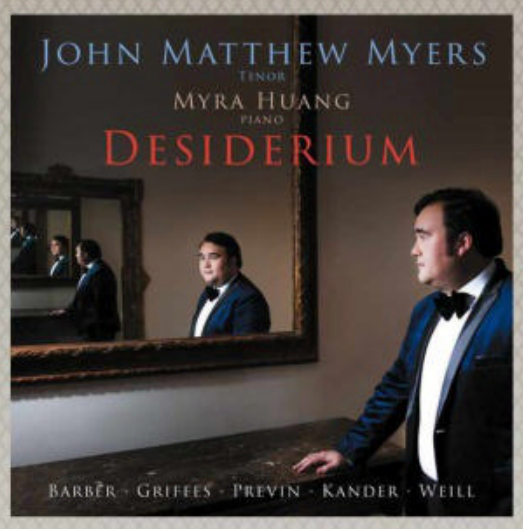
2002-2022
AVIE

# NEW RELEASES FROM AVIE RECORDS

AV2506 | CD & DIGITAL

## ISABEL BAYRAKDARIAN

On *La Zingarella: Through Romany Songland*, soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian takes the listener on a journey through lieder by Brahms, Bizet and Dvořák; operetta by Lehár, Kálmán and Herbert; and spicy Spanish songs.




AV2512 | CD & DIGITAL

## JOHN MATTHEW MYERS

Tenor John Matthew Myers makes an auspicious recording debut with *Desiderium*, an album that conveys yearning, separation, loneliness, distance, intimacy, and longing for connection, through music by American and American émigré composers. An album for our times.

AV2493 | CD & DIGITAL

## ANTONIO MENESES

Legendary cellist Antonio Meneses celebrates his 60th birthday and the 40th anniversary of his gold medal triumph at the 1982 Tchaikovsky Competition with his first recording of Brahms' two cello sonatas, generously paired with a selection of lieder arrangements.

avie-records.com

Distributed in the UK by Proper Music Distribution Ltd. and in North America by Naxos of America, Inc.

MUSIC · Spotify · prestomusic · EUROPADISC CLASSICAL

# A rich heritage

## Andrew Green takes us on a tour of some of the UK's best musical instrument museums and collections

Musical instruments are more than the mediums through which composers and performers express their talent. They're captivating objects in themselves, witness to another form of expertise – the consummate skill of the craftsperson. The UK's abundance of musical instrument museums spells it out.

If you have plenty of time and, ideally, your own set of wheels, making a countrywide tour of these wonderful collections pays rich dividends. One inevitably finds oneself spending longer than anticipated lost in admiration of all manner of things plucked, struck or blown; plus, of course, there is often an expert or two around to provide a few extra nuggets of information. However, we live in the digital age, and most museums can also be browsed comprehensively online by those who cannot get there in person. So, it's time to get the map out and – physically or virtually – plan a few visits...

### Greater London

First stop, a sight of the just-redeveloped **Royal College of Music Museum** (***rcm.ac.uk/museum***) in South Kensington. This traces its origins to 1894, when the initial collection amounted to around 250 instruments, as curator Gabriele Rossi Rognoni explains during my guided tour. 'Now there are 15,000 examples, mostly in storage. We offer a whole history of musical creativity seen through instruments.'

The permanent collection offers a feast for the eyes wherever you look. Perfectly lit display cases host a range of stringed instruments for bowing or plucking from a wide historical span (including the earliest surviving guitar) but with elegant recorders and other woodwind instruments in the mix. Dominating the space, though, is an array of keyboard instruments. You'll want to see the earliest surviving stringed keyboard instrument — a clavicytherium from around 1480. Rognoni himself singles out a gorgeously decorated mid-16th-century harpsichord made in Venice by Alessandro Trasuntino. I go for domestic simplicity – an unassuming yet handsome 1685 spinet, made in London by Stephen Keane.

Next stop, Forest Hill SE23, for the astonishingly variegated assemblage of 1,300 musical instruments gracing the **Horniman Museum** (***horniman.ac.uk***). Established in 1901 by Frederick Horniman as a repository for his various acquisitions – embracing natural history, cultural artefacts and musical instruments – the museum continues to offer free entry to all-comers, as its founder intended. 'The collection invites visitors to celebrate diversity, whatever the musical genre,' says

Glorious variety: the Horniman Museum (main and above left) is home to a wide range of instruments

LUDOVIC DES COGNETS, ANDREW LEE

Ralph original: VW's own piano

## Sound inspirations

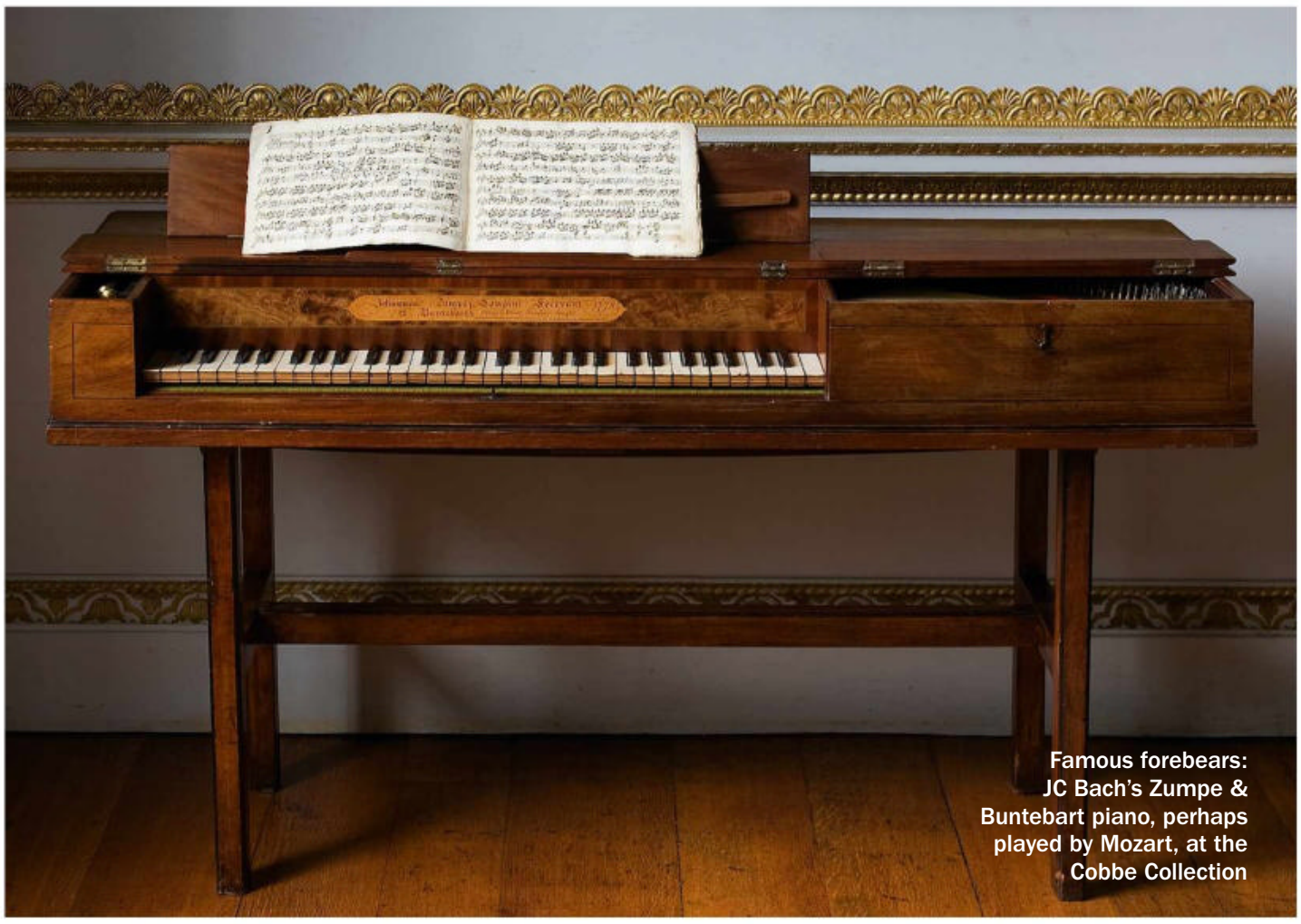
*Composers' instruments*

**The Firs** *near Worcester*
This haunting National Trust venue and birthplace of Elgar offers a re-telling of the composer's life through authentic artefacts. The range of instruments on show include his first musical plaything – a child's drum.
***nationaltrust.org.uk/the-firs***

**Holst Victorian House**
*Cheltenham*
Holst's birthplace is re-imagined as it might have been in his youth – and contains the Collard & Collard piano on which he composed the famous *Planets* suite.
***holstvictorianhouse.org.uk***

**Leith Hill Place**
*near Dorking*
The childhood home of Vaughan Williams, now owned by the National Trust, is magnificently located among the Surrey Hills. On display is the composer's piano (as modelled by David Owen Norris, above).
***nationaltrust.org.uk/leith-hill-place***

**The Red House** *Aldeburgh*
Famously home to Britten and his partner, the celebrated tenor Peter Pears, the house contains the composer's piano, and much else reflecting a haven joyously devoted to music and musicians.
***brittenpearsarts.org/visit-us/the-red-house***



Famous forebears: JC Bach's Zumpe & Buntebart piano, perhaps played by Mozart, at the Cobbe Collection

Mimi Waitzman, the museum's senior curator of Musical Collections and Cultures.

And so much of humanity is here in this magical space. I find myself whisked through much familiar territory in terms of Western classical and popular music (including an extensive display of brass instruments and an electric guitar enclave) then on to a cornucopia of exhibits from the Far East and Africa. I adore the beauty of a harp-lute from Senegal and a lyre from Ethiopia, but also savour the characterful charm of a group of pottery ocarinas and a cluster of lamellaphones – again, African – whose metal tongues attached to boards are plucked with fingers/thumbs. A select range of instruments can be heard in recordings to hand.

Still in Greater London, the **Musical Museum** (***musicalmuseum.co.uk***) in Brentford puts the accent on musical reproduction, from miniature music boxes and self-playing violins to reproducing pianos (using rolls as the recorded medium) and orchestrions (machines mimicking an orchestra or band) – plus, of course, dips into the story of the gramophone. It's all the brainchild of Frank Holland, a collector of reproducing pianos, over half a century ago.

'We now have items manufactured across a span of around four centuries,' says Steve Barrett-White, chair of the museum's board of trustees. There's no shortage of things to hear in action, representing many musical genres, classical included – and it's clearly great for kids. The choicest item for Barrett-White is the Mighty Wurlitzer theatre organ, manufactured in New York in 1928. 'This was commissioned by a wealthy Chicago resident who then suffered in the Wall Street crash, so the instrument had to be warehoused. It found its way to the Regal cinema in Kingston! The BBC's *The Organist Entertains* radio programme used to feature it.' (On similar lines, incidentally, try also the **Grange Musical Collection** (***grangemusicalcollection.com***) of self-playing instruments at Diss in Norfolk – fabulous machines of all sizes...and shapes!) While you're in the capital, you'll also want to pop into **The V&A** (***vam.ac.uk***), which houses a glorious collection of instruments chosen for their aesthetic beauty. **The Museum of the Royal Academy of Music** (***ram.ac.uk/museum***), meanwhile, has been collecting instruments, scores and memorabilia since its foundation in 1822 and **The British Museum** (***britishmuseum.org***) carries a renowned collection of musical instruments from around the world, dating back through millennia. And in Hampstead, the National Trust's **Fenton House** (***nationaltrust.org.uk/fenton-house-and-garden***) is home to the Benton Fletcher Collection of early keyboard instruments, all in playing condition.

### Surrey

Driving to the National Trust's Hatchlands Park property near Guildford always stirs excitement at the prospect of feasting the eyes on the keyboard instruments in Alec Cobbe's peerless **Cobbe Collection** (***cobbecollection.co.uk***). The USP is their special connection to composers. Instruments from a range of European makers

Plenty of pluck: a 1756 Jacob Kirkman harpsichord at the Richard Burnett Collection

link to the likes of Purcell and Elgar; Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven; Chopin and Mahler; Liszt and Bizet. This isn't a collection that stands on ceremony, shrouded in silence. Examples feature in the regular series of Hatchlands concerts, and everyday visitors can hear the sound of each instrument via an audio guide. 'The articles of the collection's charitable trust stipulate that the instruments must be kept in playing order and used,' explains Cobbe.

See Elgar's Broadwood piano which enabled the sketching of such works as *The Dream of Gerontius* and the *Enigma Variations*; the Jean Roller combined piano/composing table on which Bizet penned his opera *Carmen*; and Johann Christian Bach's Zumpe & Buntebart 1770s piano, very likely used by Bach's friend Mozart for the first performance of the latter's formidable A minor Sonata, K310. 'Imagine being able to hear that sonata played here at Hatchlands on a range of instruments manufactured in Mozart's lifetime!' says Cobbe. 'Each offers something completely different.'

## Tunbridge Wells

Talking of historic keyboards, the 2015 closure of the Finchcocks Musical Museum at Goudhurst,

Ancient and modern: (clockwise from above) 3-D printed pipes in Glasgow; a natural trumpet at Manchester's RNCM; the Royal Academy of Music's Piano Gallery

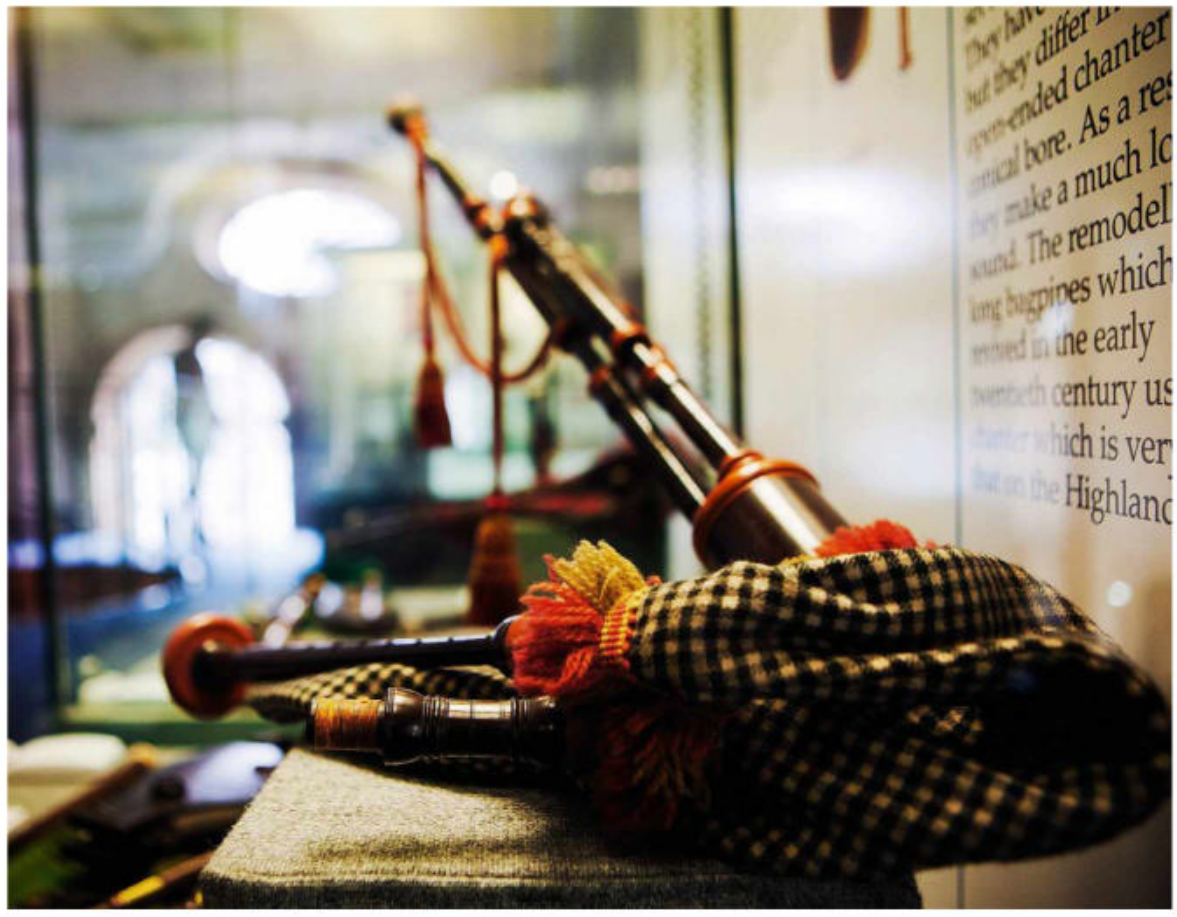
Kent meant the sale of most of fortepianist Richard Burnett's extraordinary collection of historical keyboard instruments. The good news is that 14 classic examples – dating from 1700 to 1824 – remain accessible via the **Richard Burnett Heritage Collection** (***finchcocks.co.uk/collection.html***) at Waterdown House in Tunbridge Wells. Viewings are by appointment, and there are special events and concerts.

## Oxford

On my latest visit to Oxford University's **Bate Collection** (***bate.ox.ac.uk***), unassumingly tucked away south of the city centre, I'm greeted with news that this remarkable repository transfers to purpose-built premises in north-central Oxford in a few years' time. Perhaps then it will get the visitors it deserves. The collection bears the name of the late Philip Bate, a cash-strapped BBC producer who developed a passion for picking up historical instruments as bargains from market stalls and junk shops.

The collection has developed across a broad range of instrument types which threatens to

WWW.COBBECOLLECTION.CO.UK, ALAMY, DOSFOTO, NATIONAL PIPING CENTRE



Well, I'll be blowed: pipes at the Morpeth Chantry Bagpipe Museum; (below) the still playable 1594 tenor trombone by Anton Schnitzer of Nuremberg, now held in Edinburgh

burst these modest quarters at the seams. Rank upon rank of wind instruments, for example, highlight any number of adaptations in design. The eye is drawn to the serpent (forerunner of the trombone) which may have been played at the Battle of Waterloo. However, my personal favourite is a clutch of 18th-century clarinets d'amour – for sheer looks. And pop to the upstairs gallery for a surprise: two Afghan lutes – a rabab and a shash tar – donated by US Army colonel Frederick E Carl, who rescued them while on active service in Afghanistan. 'Without his intervention, the instruments would have been destroyed by the Taliban,' notes the Collection's curator, Andy Lamb.

Before leaving Oxford, maybe take in the musical instrument holdings at the **Ashmolean** (***ashmolean.org/musical-instruments***) and the even more extensive one at the **Pitt-Rivers Museum** (***prm.ox.ac.uk***.).

## Manchester

Public access to the **Royal Northern College of Music's Collection of Historic Musical Instruments** (***rncm.ac.uk/research/resources/collection***) is restricted, though every instrument (around 300 all told) can be viewed online. Familiar European instruments rub shoulders with items from around the globe – Cameroon and Dahomey, Bengal and New Guinea, China and Japan, Ecuador and Tibet. Star pick: an exquisite silk-stringed Japanese kokū with narrow elongated fingerboard.

## Edinburgh

None of these collections traces its origins further back than the one owned by the **University of Edinburgh** (***ed.ac.uk/information-services/library-museum-gallery/crc/collections/musical-instrument-collection***). Professor John Donaldson assembled some 200 instruments in the mid-19th century, and an active collecting strategy instigated in the 1950s means that over 6,000 instruments are now held. At its St Cecilia's Hall home, the archive includes a number of acquired collections – including percussion instruments once owned by legendary player James Blades, and what is said to be the largest collection of clarinets in the world, assembled by eminent geologist/amateur clarinettist Nicholas Shackleton.

'You don't need to be a musical expert to enjoy seeing and learning about the 400 musical instruments on display,' says Cecilia's Hall curator Sarah Deters. Among the exhibits she singles out are a 1594 tenor trombone by Anton Schnitzer of Nuremberg, one of the oldest playable trombones in the world, and a Chinese tam-tam once owned by the afore-mentioned Blades. 'He used it to record the three gong strokes heard in the introduction frames for General Film Distributors films in the 1930s,' says Deters.

> You don't need to be a musical expert to enjoy the 400 musical instruments on display at the University of Edinburgh

## Glasgow

Classical composers rarely embrace bagpipes (Peter Maxwell Davies's *An Orkney Wedding, with Sunrise* is a rare example). However, prepare to be bewitched at Glasgow's **National Piping Centre** (***thepipingcentre.co.uk***) which imaginatively promotes playing and incorporates a fascinating Museum of Piping, smartly designed and endlessly informative. There aren't just Highland bagpipes on show, says the centre's Jamie Curran. 'There are also Northumbrian pipes and other examples from around the world. Our earliest example of Highland pipes is believed to date from the time of the Battle of Culloden in the mid-18th century. And we have a set of 3D-printed pipes!'

## Morpeth

Talking of Northumbrian pipes, you'll find plenty more at the **Morpeth Chantry Bagpipe Museum** (***museumsnorthumberland.org.uk/morpeth-chantry-bagpipe-museum***) in Northumberland itself. 'They're chamber music instruments, making a more intimate sound than Highland bagpipes,' museum curator Anne Moore explains. Overall, more than a hundred sets of bagpipes take you as far afield as France, Italy, Spain and Estonia. 'Bagpipes are found across Europe, Asia Minor and in Africa,' says Moore. 'No one knows where they originated.'

CENTRE FOR RESEARCH COLLECTIONS/UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

PENTATONE

# Verdi - La Traviata

Star soprano **Lisette Oropesa** sings Violetta in this new studio recording of Verdi's ***La Traviata***, joined by her colleagues **René Barbera** as Alfredo and **Lester Lynch** as Germont, with **Daniel Oren** conducting the **Dresdner Philharmonie** and the **Sächsischer Staatsopernchor Dresden**. The main soprano role gradually shifts from coloratura virtuosity to a more lyrical, dramatic idiom as the tragedy progresses, and this performance shows Oropesa's fluency in both styles. Presenting the opera in its entirety, this recording captures the absolute work of art that is Verdi's most cherished masterpiece.

PTC 5186 956

**NEW ALBUM!**

Produced by

San Francisco Classical Recording Company

Discover here:
lnk.to/8amWGTQv

iTunes · Music · qobuz · amazon · Europadisc · TIDAL · Presto Classical · DEEZER · Spotify

www.pentatonemusic.com

Distributed in the UK by RSK

# Paxton House Scotland

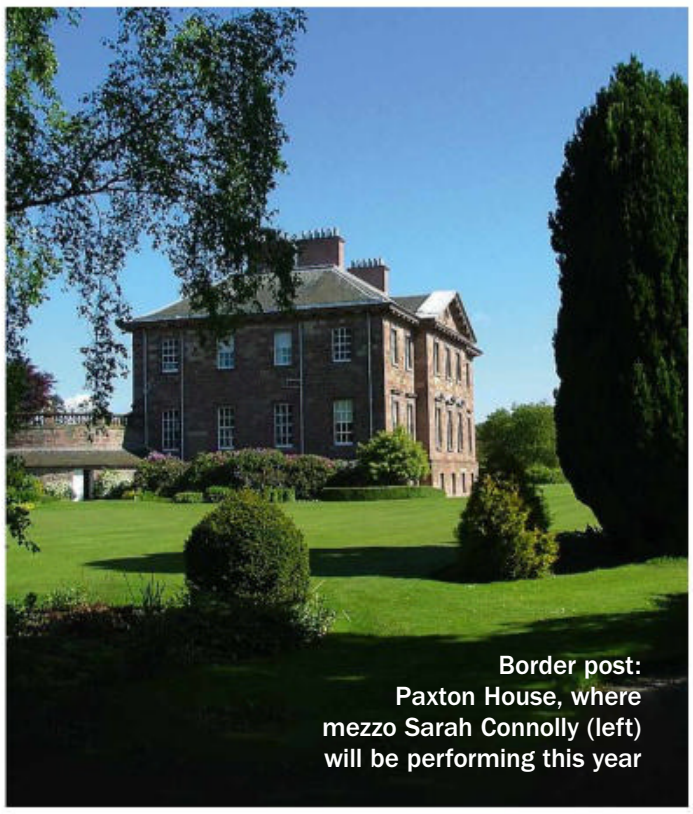
Nipping across the border from Berwick-upon-Tweed, ***Paul Riley*** discovers a mansion adorned with fine art and glorious music-making

A picturesque setting: Paxton Festival concerts are mostly held in the world-class gallery

A morning mist hangs low. Approaching journey's end, the river Tweed is a carpet of bobbing swans. And from across the water the skirl of the pipes welcomes visitors as a boat disgorges its cargo of eager tourists. With the town's Tudor and Elizabeth ramparts, Hawksmoor-designed barracks and handsome Jacobean Church, Berwick-Upon-Tweed is as much a feast for the eyes as for ears entranced by the plangent call of curlews across the estuary.

Come July, though, ears have something else to detain them, as Music at Paxton lures discerning festival-goers a few miles north and across the border to a Palladian mansion proudly sited above a bend in the Tweed and enveloped in bosky 18th-century parkland laid out by Robert Robinson, Scotland's answer to Capability Brown. Beyond the ha-ha, highland cattle stand implacable, fiery in the late afternoon sun; deep in the woods, the sizzle of the zipwire promises less bucolic attractions; and on the approach roads, motorists are cautioned to watch out for red squirrels.

The squirrels aren't the only nearly endangered species. Covid forced cancellation of the 2020 festival, and while live concerts returned last year, they were be-masked and socially distanced. Happily, it's now full steam ahead for 2022, as 'business as usual' resumes with nine action-packed days from 22-31 July. Steadily evolving in scope and ambition, there has been a chamber music festival at



Border post: Paxton House, where mezzo Sarah Connolly (left) will be performing this year

Paxton House since 2006. And although its elegant Georgian interiors – complete with a fine collection of Chippendale furniture – were made for intimate music-making, when the first pink sandstone blocks began to rise from the ground, Haydn's Op. 1 string quartets were still some way off.

By the time a commanding purpose-built picture gallery had been added in the second decade of the 19th century, Haydn's complete quartet output had been joined by that of Mozart – not to mention the lion's share of Beethoven's. And it's the picture gallery, subsequently kitted out in the high-Victorian style with pictures peppering the walls in a dizzying display, that the Festival calls home. Not just the Festival, in fact – Scotland's national galleries exhibit alongside some of the original paintings, and more contemporary work colonises adjacent spaces including the Hayloft Gallery.

For the audience, there's something about the atmosphere that encourages keen attention. A portrait of John Campbell, First Marquess of Breadalbane – finger on temple, savouring the scene – looks down as if imparting a quizzical benediction. Last year, performances of Beethoven by artists-in-residence the Maxwell Quartet were received with a concentration that was almost palpable – their residency ends this summer, so catch them while you can. But with the Beethoven concluded, audience fingers began to tap, feet to dandle rhythmically, and brows to unfurrow as an infectious wave of Scottish fiddle music flooded the room. That's the thing about Paxton. It can do enrapt seriousness to the manner born, but it's never stuffy – and that goes for the relaxed informality of the whole experience, non-existent dress code and all.

Since 2018, Angus Smith has been the artistic director. As founding member of the vocal Orlando Consort and erstwhile director of Sheffield's Music in the Round, he's both musical poacher and gamekeeper, always open to ideas from the invited artists but with an unerring instinct for what will work. 'It's good to mesh the festival with some of the house's backstory,' he suggests, but he prefers 'light thematic emphases and reference points' rather than full-on themes.

> 'In a wonderful space with the performers so close, a special dialogue can happen'

'Chamber music isn't so much a repertoire as a way of making music, an attitude of mind,' Smith insists. 'It's music to be made in a room... and when people come up the drive, see the lawns opening out before them and the silvery glint of the river through the trees, they're already receptive. Sitting in a wonderful space with the performers so close, a special dialogue can begin to happen.' There are other dialogues to be forged, too, bringing together musicians who have never played together before: 'It's always fascinating to create new and sometimes unpredictable collaborations.'

Among those Berwickshire-bound this summer are baritone Roderick Williams, who will be paying his respects to the Vaughan Williams anniversary together with new songs by Sarah Cattley. Meanwhile, mezzo-soprano Sarah Connolly gives the Scottish premiere of Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Songs of Sleep and Regret*; and, following a round-table discussion, pianist Pavel Kolesnikov salutes the centenary of novelist Marcel Proust's death. Add some family-friendly 'Traditional Tunes for Tiny People' and works by Cecilia McDowall and Lili Boulanger from the Mithras Piano Trio, and the reasons to explore this glorious patch of Scottish Borderland become ever more compelling.

**Further info:** Music at Paxton: **www.musicatpaxton.co.uk**

## A famous friend
## LS Lowry

The Manchester-based artist (above) enjoyed painting while listening to the music of Bellini and Donizetti, and for his 77th birthday (fearing that he might not make 80!) the Hallé Orchestra gifted him a concert of his favourite works. But Lowry also had a soft spot for the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, regularly holidaying there and even contemplating buying a handsome house guarded by stone lions looking out to sea. Berwick remembers him with an 18-stop Lowry Trail following in the painter's footsteps, pinpointing the sights that inspired him, and crossing the river to Tweedmouth and the sandy expanses of Spittal.

COLIN HATTERSLEY, PAXTON HOUSE, CHRISTOPHER PLEDGER, GETTY

**Composer of the Week** is broadcast on Radio 3 at 12pm, Monday to Friday. Programmes in July are:
**27 June – 1 July** Billy Strayhorn
**4-8 July** Tour de France: Rameau
**11-15 July** Tour de France: Montgeroult
**18-22 July** Tour de France: Ravel
**25-29 July** Beethoven

# George Walker

## Over the course of a long career, the American produced works as individual as they were immaculately crafted, says *Elizabeth de Brito*

ILLUSTRATION: MATT HERRING

George Walker boasts one of the longest compositional careers in history, writing well into his 90s. In his prolific career, he produced over 90 works, an enviable array of masterpieces including concertos for trombone and piano, five piano sonatas, five sinfonias, brass quintets, wind quintets, song cycles and more. He wrote most extensively, though, for stringed instruments, with a Violin Concerto and Cello Concerto, sonatas for cello, violin and viola and two string quartets to his name.

But as well as being an extraordinary composer and musician, he was a trailblazer for black people. Racism would offer numerous setbacks during his lifetime, derailing his career as a concert pianist and ensuring he would consistently struggle for his work to be recognised. But now that we are in his centenary year, as new recordings emerge and performances and studies increase, hopefully George Walker can enter the canon as one of the greatest American composers, his genius truly recognised.

Born and raised in Washington D.C., Walker grew up in a supportive, nurturing household full of music, his father a well respected local physician. Young George began piano lessons at the age of five, quickly displaying every sign of being a prodigy. At ten, he was enrolled at the local Howard University's music prep school, from which he would graduate at just 14. He would also find early employment as a musician during church services. Turning down a scholarship to Howard University itself, he chose instead to study away from home at Oberlin Conservatory, Ohio. In doing so, he became not only the youngest, but also the only black student at the prestigious institution, the first of many such instances in which he would tread a path for others to follow.

It was with the initial intention of becoming a concert pianist – and on a full scholarship – that Walker entered Oberlin. During his time there, he was exposed to some of the great pianists of the age, including Rachmaninov, who he saw perform live in 1938 in 'a memorable concert' that left a great impression.

**Racism would offer numerous setbacks, derailing Walker's career as a concert pianist**

Oberlin also offered him his first performance opportunities, and at his senior recital he played Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto with the conservatory orchestra, receiving a standing ovation from the packed house. Studying composition with Normand Lockwood, he also wrote his first pieces, the Caprice for piano and Responses for voice and piano.

After graduating with honours in 1941, he went on to attend the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, studying piano with Rudolf Serkin, composition with Rosario Scalero and orchestration with Gian Carlo Menotti. Among the lifelong friends he made there were the fellow future pianists Walter Hautzig, Jacob Lateiner and Seymour Lipkin, who would later conduct the world premiere of his *Lyric for Strings* in 1946 – originally part of his String Quartet No. 1 written as

GETTY

## George Walker's style

**Determined individualist** Walker eschewed association with other composers and his music is uncategorisable by distinct musical schools. He didn't include his graduation piece, a violin sonata, in his catalogue as it 'sounded too much like Brahms'. Each piece was designed to be unique, sounding nothing like his previous works.

**Increasing complexity** His music is that of an elegant master-craftsman, highly detailed with a harmonic language that becomes increasingly complex with age. But in his music there is nothing overly embellished or ornate – only that which serves the precise structure of the piece.

**Counterpoint and chromaticism** Walker combines an intense obsession with counterpoint with an unconventional display of chromaticism. Almost never truly serial or atonal, devices include octatonic scales (used in his wind ensemble piece *Canvas*) and quartal harmonies.

**Musical quotations** Walker's music contains frequent quotations from spirituals, jazz and folk music in brilliantly subtle ways. Instead of overt references, he disguises them with rhythmic diversions, reharmonisations and embellishments (such as *Solitude* by Duke Ellington, above, in his Piano Concerto).

EASTMAN

Taking notes: (left) George Walker watches on as James DePreist and the Juilliard Orchestra rehearse his Sinfonia No. 3, 2007; (below) the composer's son, vioinist Gregory Walker

a postgraduate, it would go on to become known as Walker's most famous piece.

Walker left Curtis in 1945 with two artist diplomas in piano and composition, that same year giving his debut recital at Town Hall in New York in a programme that included his own Piano Sonata No 2. Two weeks later, his debut with the Philadelphia Orchestra, in Rachmaninov's Third Piano Concerto under Eugene Ormandy, followed. Yet, despite these successes, progress proved tough, due to his race. 'It took me five years to get concert management,' he later recalled. 'I had friends who had done what I had done, and they got management immediately. But I was the most gifted piano student at Curtis. Everybody knew that, yet they were the ones that got management. I went to Europe and played in seven countries because I thought it would help get concerts here. It didn't.'

In 1950, he finally secured management with National Concert Artists, the first black instrumentalist to be signed to a major management company. Engagements still proved elusive, though, even when the concerts he did play met with acclaim. 'Those successes were meaningless,' he told the *New York Times* in 1982, 'because without the sustained effect of follow-up concerts my career had no momentum. And because I was black, I couldn't get either major or minor dates.'

In the meantime, the studies continued, as did the trailblazing. After becoming the first African American to earn a doctorate at New York's Eastman School of Music in 1956, he received a Fulbright fellowship to study with Nadia Boulanger in Paris. 'You are a composer!' proclaimed the legendary pedagogue at his first lesson, describing his Piano Sonata No. 2 as 'a masterpiece'. She would become an important mentor.

## 'You are a composer!' proclaimed Nadia Boulanger at Walker's first lesson in Paris

The 1960s saw the beginning of what would be a long career in academia, with most of the decade spent teaching piano at Smith College, in 1968 becoming its first black tenured professor. The stable income of a teaching position afforded him the opportunity to devote more time to composition, and in 1964 he won the Harvey Gaul Prize for his Sonata for Two Pianos. Other works from this period include *Antiphonys for Chamber Orchestra*, *Spatials* for piano (his only 12-tone work), *Perimeters* for clarinet and piano and his Second String Quartet. And further success came with a Guggenheim fellowship and a visitor professorship at the University of Colorado before he became a full tenured professor at Rutgers University in 1969, a post he would hold until his retirement in 1992.

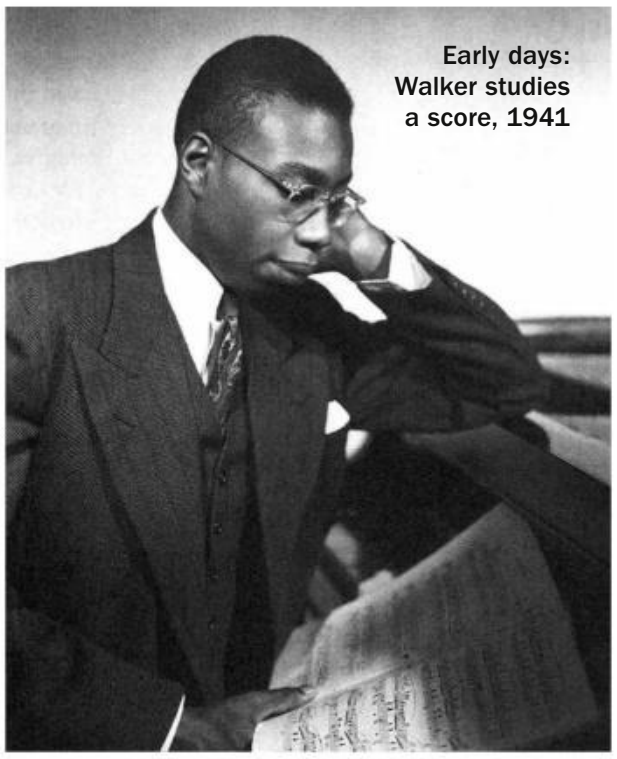
It was in 1971, just short of his 50th birthday, that Walker gained his first recording contract, performing several of his own piano works including Sonata No. 2, *Spatials* and *Spektra*. In addition, Natalie Hinderas recorded his First Piano Sonata, and further fame came in 1973 with the Black Composer Series – the now iconic CBS Masterworks series included a recording of his Trombone Concerto and *Lyric for Strings*, performed by the LSO under Paul Freeman.

Walker was becoming well-established with a steady stream of commissions that would continue throughout the rest of his life. In 1975, the National Endowment of the Arts commissioned his Piano Concerto, premiered by the Minneapolis Symphony and Paul Freeman and later recorded by Hinderas. He was also greatly respected by fellow pianists such as Leon Bates, who commissioned and premiered his Third Piano Sonata in 1976, and Frederick Moyer, who commissioned his Fourth Piano Sonata in 1985, later recording it. The 1980s also brought major works such as his Cello Concerto, commissioned by the New York Philharmonic, and *An Eastman Overture*, commissioned by his alma mater the Eastman School.

It was in 1995 that the Boston Symphony commissioned him to write a piece for voice and orchestra honouring the great black tenor Roland Hayes. The resulting *Lilacs* – which set the Whitman poem 'When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd', a reflection on the assassination of Abraham Lincoln – saw Walker became the first African-American to win the Pulitzer Prize for Music. To mark the achievement, Washington D.C. Mayor Marion Berry later declared 17 June George Walker Day to honour and commemorate a composer born and raised in the city.

Now an octogenarian, Walker's compositional output took on greater

GETTY, HURRICANE IMAGES INC.


Early days: Walker studies a score, 1941

innovations after his retirement from teaching. His extraordinary Violin Concerto of 2008 was a present for his son Gregory, an eminent violinist and composer who would go on to record it with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Walker followed this up with another gift for Gregory in 2011: the short but intense encore *Bleu*. Family connections were important to the composer, whose 1971 *Lament* was written in his grandmother's memory and whose 1991 *Poème* for violin and orchestra was dedicated to his mother.

In 2017, a year before his death, the 95-year-old Walker saw a lifelong dream fulfilled when Chineke! performed the UK premiere of his *Lyric for Strings* at the BBC Proms. Nearly 70 years separate that early masterpiece with Walker's final completed work, 2015's Sinfonia No. 5 'Visions', which, spurred by the Charleston massacre, combines Walker's own spoken text with the orchestra in a powerful tribute to the victims.

This year – 27 June – marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of George Walker, whose remarkable career took him from a youthful piano prodigy to a nonagenarian genius of compositional complexity. Thanks not least to Albany Records, with whom he enjoyed a long recording relationship, we are able to enjoy a great deal of his music, much of it performed by Gregory, its finest interpreter. His centenary year is surely the perfect time to explore his life, music and legacy as one of the great American composers.

BBC Proms *George Walker's Variations for Orchestra, Trombone Concerto and Lilacs are performed at the Proms on 26 July, 16 August and 2 Sept*

# GEORGE WALKER Life & Times

## 1922

**LIFE:** George Walker is born on 27 June in ***Washington D.C.***. His father George is a doctor who emigrated from Jamaica, where his own father was a slave.

**TIMES:** At a ceremony in Washington D.C., former US president William H Taft dedicates the recently completed Lincoln Memorial and presents it to the current president, Warren G Harding.

## 1946

**LIFE:** As a graduate student at the Curtis Institute, he composes his *Lyric for Strings*, originally entitled 'Lament' and intended as the second movement of his String Quartet No. 1.

**TIMES:** The inhabitants of the Bikini Atoll group of islands in the Pacific are forcibly relocated to allow for Operation Crossroads, a pair of nuclear weapons tests, to be carried out by the US.

## 1982

**LIFE:** The New York Philharmonic commissions and performs his Cello Concerto, with ***Lorne Munroe*** as soloist. He later revises the work and re-titles it Movements for Cello and Orchestra.

**TIMES:** The US businessman and journalist Al Neuharth launches *USA Today*. The newspaper's use of colour photos and graphics attracts some critics, but soon proves a major game-changer.

## 2018

**LIFE:** Having continued composing well into his tenth decade, he dies aged 96 in Montclair, New Jersey. He is buried in the town's Mount Hebron Cemetery.

**TIMES:** InSight, NASA's Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport research robot, lands at Elysium Planitia on Mars.

## 1960

**LIFE:** He marries the Canadian pianist and musicologist Helen Siemens, a devoted champion of black composers and, like him, a Fulbright scholar and pupil of Nadia Boulanger.

**TIMES:** Following a visit to Africa, the British prime minister ***Harold Macmillan*** makes his 'Winds of Change' speech, signalling the imminent independence of several colonies in the continent.

## 1996

**LIFE:** He wins the Pulitzer Prize for Music for his Whitman-setting *Lilacs* for soprano and orchestra, becoming the first ever African-American composer to do so.

**TIMES:** At the Summer Olympics in Atlanta, US sprinter ***Michael Johnson*** wins the men's 400m and 200m, breaking the world record with a time of 19.32 seconds in the latter event.

# Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

## Piano Concerto No. 1

***Claire Jackson*** explains how this king of the concert hall triumphed despite its inauspicious start in life, and presents the best recordings

### The composer

Though the 34-year-old Tchaikovsky suffered a verbal mauling at his First Piano Concerto's run-through (see right), he had by this stage enjoyed sufficient success to ensure his confidence wasn't completely shattered – not least that of his Second Symphony, which was cheered to the rafters at three performances in early 1873 and had gained the approval of the eminent critic and musical mover-and-shaker Vladimir Stasov. Great things lay just round the corner, too, including the ballet *Swan Lake* (1877), his Fourth Symphony (1878) and the opera *Eugene Onegin* (1879).

**Building a Library** is broadcast on Radio 3 at 9.30am each Saturday as part of *Record Review*. A highlights podcast is available on BBC Sounds.

### The work

The story of how Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 entered the world sounds a warning to all composers to ignore those fickle critics. Keen to persuade Nikolai Rubinstein to give its premiere, Tchaikovsky played the piece from start to finish in the company of the eminent pianist. Rubinstein remained quiet throughout – before dismissing the work in no uncertain terms. The snub stung Tchaikovsky, who conveyed the details of this disastrous read-though in a letter he wrote some three years after the incident.

According to the composer, Rubinstein had expressed his opinion that 'only two or three pages were worth preserving; the rest must be thrown away or completely rewritten' because the concerto was 'badly written as to be beyond rescue'.

Tchaikovsky – at some emotional cost – stood by his work, which was premiered not by Rubinstein, but by Hans von Bülow, who performed it with a freelance orchestra under Benjamin Johnson Lang in Boston on 25 October 1875. The Concerto, which was revised several times by Tchaikovsky (the 1888 version is the most commonly played), has gone on to become one of the most popular works in the piano repertoire and is a staple in competition finals.

Like the Mozart concertos, it can be both frothy and deeply complex, leading many pianists to revisit it at various points in their career, exploring different aspects along the way. Emil Gilels made a handful of recordings of the Concerto and Martha Argerich has so far released three. The piece has never been out of fashion, recorded by pianists across generations, from Claudio Arrau to Haochen Zhang.

As for Rubinstein, he made a U-turn on his denouncement, and – possibly to show that there were no hard feelings – Tchaikovsky continued to dedicate compositions to the Russian virtuoso, including his Second Piano Concerto.

> Rubinstein expressed his opinion that 'only two or three pages were worth preserving'

The punchy brass and striking chords that open the first movement of Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto provide one of the most memorable passages in classical music (as the RPO knew well when choosing it to open its *Hooked On Classics* single in 1981). The style recalls the percussive beginning to Grieg's Piano Concerto (composed in 1868), which similarly melts into lively conversation between soloist and ensemble. But before that integration, the declamatory piano part set over soaring strings in the grand introduction rouses even the most fatigued listener. Not for nothing is the movement a popular fixture in 'classical music to drive to' playlists, and it was also recently used as a shoo-in to replace the Russian national anthem at the 2020 Olympics, where Russian athletes competed under the Russian Olympic

Return visitor: Martha Argerich has recorded Tchaikovsky's Concerto three times; (below) Nikolai Rubinstein was initially less than enthusiastic

Committee after the World Anti-Doping Agency had banned the country's formal participation at all international sporting events.

At first, the opening appears to be almost a separate piece in itself – the big chordal melody does not make an obvious return throughout the movement. The gorgeous, but meandering, development may have been what Rubinstein objected to in that unsuccessful preview; the subtle evolution against sudden changes in texture was unusual for the period. After one of several 'false endings', the piano takes on a galloping melody based on a folksong Tchaikovsky had heard in Ukraine, sung by a blind beggar accompanying himself on the hurdy-gurdy. The creeping urgency is underlined by woodwind echoes and flourishes. The playful *Allegro con spirito* theme appears again towards the end of the section, moving into a growling, rumbling piano part that, after another extended cadenza, reaches a virtuosic finish. The final ascending figures require both grit and glitter.

The second and third movements are significantly shorter than the first. The middle *Andantino semplice* begins with a charming flute solo that introduces a lush piano melody. Unlike the first movement, where the piano takes a combative role, here the soloist settles into deeper exchange with the orchestra. There is great variation in the interpretation of 'andantino': Stephen Hough and the Minnesota Orchestra under Osmo Vänskä offer a sprightly 6:19 minutes in their 2010 recording, while Lang Lang, Daniel Barenboim and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra squeeze out every phrase in their 8:05 minute version, recorded in 2003.

The theme in the third movement is also based on a Ukrainian song, this time derived from one of the tunes collected by Balakirev that Tchaikovsky had then arranged for piano duet. A perky, angular dance becomes expansive and lyrical, with call-and-response between piano and orchestra. Scrambling scales begin the extended build-up to the Concerto's conclusion, aided by rumbling timpani and unison orchestral rhythms. Taking inspiration from Liszt, Tchaikovsky finishes with a fast chromatic ascent, split between alternate hands – a pianistic *tour de force* that never fails to raise a smile.

*Turn the page to discover our recommended recordings of Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1*

GETTY

A winning team: Van Cliburn with his mother and conductor Kirill Kondrashin

# A noble yet blistering performance

The best recording

**Van Cliburn** *(piano)*
RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra/ Kirill Kondrashin
*RCA G010001770065I*

With bravura fanfares and tender reflections – all requiring pristine technique – it's no wonder that Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto has long been a competition favourite. Beatrice Rana's flawless performance of the work at the Montreal International Music Competition in 2011 won her first prize; her follow-up performance in 2014 at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition led to a Warner Classics recording with Antonio Pappano and the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia that was a strong contender for this category.

Rana has followed in the footsteps of Van Cliburn, the Texan pianist who gave his name to the quadrennial competition, and who also gave a career-changing performance of the Tchaikovsky Concerto.

## Van Cliburn takes the opening big chords at a pleasant, stately pace

In 1958, Van Cliburn arrived in Moscow to participate in the inaugural International Tchaikovsky Competition. By the time he played the Concerto in the final (with the Moscow Radio Symphony under Kirill Kondrashin), he had become known affectionately as 'Vanyusha' or 'Vanyitschka'. Jurors were nervous about giving an American first place – the competition had been held in part to showcase Soviet cultural supremacy and distrust between the US and USSR was ever increasing. But in a show of artistic unity, Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev is reported to have said that the best pianist should win, no matter what their nationality. Van Cliburn repeated his winning performance of the Tchaikovsky Concerto back in the US, having invited Kirill Kondrashin to join him on an impromptu tour. The concerto was performed twice in Carnegie Hall, where this recording was made.

Van Cliburn takes the opening big chords at a pleasant, stately pace, imbuing

## Three other great recordings

***Martha Argerich (piano)***
Martha's Argerich's third recording of the concerto, with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and Claudio Abbado in 1994, has the edge on her previous version with Kirill Kondrashin. There's no messing about with the big tunes, those early chords are perfectly placed, the second movement is subtle and luxurious, and the final *Allegro* is spun like silk. Without imposing her personality, Argerich manages to make it seem like Tchaikovsky intended this piece for her all along. *(Deutsche Grammophon 449 8162)*

***Daniil Trifonov (piano)***
Daniil Trifonov won the Tchaikovsky Competition in 2011 and the Concerto was recorded as part of a compilation album shortly after. Joined for the occasion by the Mariinsky Orchestra and Valery Gergiev, Trifonov gives a sublime performance that earns him a place in the top division. The second movement is beautifully paced, zipping towards a colourful patchwork *Allegro* and a ravishing finale. The piano has a bright-but-rounded tone, particularly noticeable in the build-up to the *Allegro con spirito*, which may not suit all tastes. *(Mariinsky MAR0530)*

***Vladimir Ashkenazy (piano)***
Recorded at the Walthamstow Assembly Hall in 1963, this even-handed account has a vintage fuzziness to the sound quality that suits Ashkenazy's pianism. Although the solo part itself isn't in high-definition, the balance works well, with beautiful ensemble playing and curiously sharp brass from the London Symphony Orchestra. Ashkenazy takes a reserved approach to the cadenza at the end of the first movement, unbuttoning somewhat in a second movement that is pure Romanticism, before running wild in a free-flowing finale – conductor Lorin Maazel just about manages to keep those unison rhythms under control. *(Decca 483 2584)*

## And one to avoid...

The 1989 Deutsche Grammophon recording by the then wunderkind Yevgeny Kissin and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra with Herbert von Karajan is discombobulating. The slow speeds and ample rubato were doubtless intended to be meaningful introspection, but feel mannered. The *Andantino semplice* in particular is far too drawn out – the flute and strings sound as though they are about to fall asleep – and the outer movements lack the wit other pianists permit the piece.

the cascading melody with a restrained power. The fragmented notes of the middle section are beautifully clear, as is the rumbling lower-octave section (in some recordings the phrase seems to disappear off an edge). The piano does feel a little tinny towards the end of the movement, but not enough to distract from an otherwise triumphant account.

The *Andantino semplice* is more elongated than many modern readings – with the exception of Kissin (see above). Yet the sentimentality is leavened by a thrilling finale complete with a blistering keyboard ascent.

GETTY, T. MARDO

Romantic explorations: put Joseph Moog's recording of the Fourth Piano Concerto by Anton Rubinstein (below) on your to-do list

# Continue the journey...

*We suggest works to try to after Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto*

Though ***Tchaikovsky*** may have forgiven Nikolai Rubinstein enough to dedicate his Second Piano Concerto to him, the pianist then died before he got to premiere it – that honour fell to Sergei Taneyev. While it has never matched the popularity of the First, the Second has much to recommend it, not least a gorgeous trio for piano, violin and cello in the second movement and a finale that is a burst of sheer good humour. (**Peter Donohoe (piano); Bournemouth SO/ Rudolf Barshai** *Warner Classics 500 9622*).

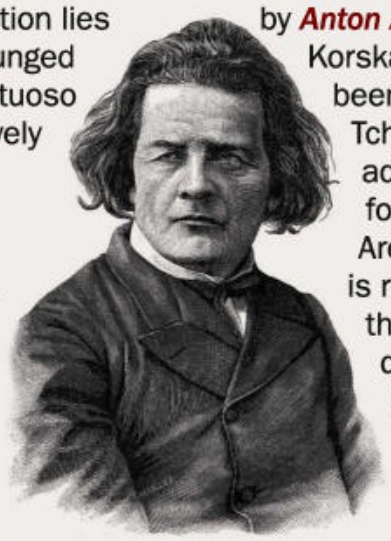
Tchaikovsky was by means alone in having his ears turned by Ukrainian folk – ***Sergei Lyapunov*** does likewise in his *Rhapsody on Ukrainian Themes* for piano and orchestra, composed in 1907. The wistful opening melodies on oboe, flute and cor anglais suggest a work of gloomy introspection lies ahead, but we are soon plunged into all manner of piano virtuoso fireworks, complete with lively Cossack dancing. (**Hamish Milne (piano); BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra/Martyn Brabbins** *Hyperion CDA67326*).

It is also Lyapunov that we have to thank for putting the finishing touches to the Second Piano Concerto by Tchaikovsky's one-time champion ***Mily Balakirev***. Though Balakirev began his concerto in 1861 and returned to it later in life, it was left incomplete at his death in 1910. Listen out, in particular, for the stirring Russian Orthodox Requiem-inspired second movement and the ebullient finale. (**Malcolm Binns (piano); English Northern Philharmonia/ David Lloyd-Jones** *Hyperion CDA66640*).

> Lyapunov soon plunges us into all manner of piano virtuoso fireworks

A major influence on Tchaikovsky's First was the Fourth Piano Concerto by ***Anton Rubinstein***, older brother of Nikolai. Similarly packed with memorable tunes, plus fistfuls of notes to keep the soloist on his or her toes, its comparative neglect today is hard to fathom. (**Joseph Moog (piano); Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland Pfalz/Nicholas Milton** *Onyx ONYX4089*).

Finally, try the Concerto in F minor by ***Anton Arensky***, whom Rimsky-Korskakov described as having been clearly influenced by Tchaikovsky (before sniffily adding that 'he will be quickly forgotten'). Written when Arensky was just 20, the work is rounded off by a *Scherzo* that features a distinctively quirky 5/4 time signature. (**Konstantin Scherbakov (piano); Russian PO/Dmitry Yablonsky** *Naxos 8.570526*).



# Reviews

## Recordings and books rated by expert critics

## Welcome

Before you immerse yourself in the BBC Proms, there's plenty of time to take in some of the very fine recordings shared in the following pages. Leading the way this month is another dazzling Handel recording from Harry Bicket, The English Concert and an all-star cast (see opposite), while countertenor Jakub Józef Orliński presents a brilliant recital of Polish folksong with pianist Michał Biel. Keeping it in the family, we've turns from the Labèque sisters, the Bevan sisters and father-and-son Kantorows, Jean-Jacques and Alexandre, while Mitsuko Uchida has made a triumphant return to Beethoven – our Instrumental Choice. Finally, if you feel like taking a trip, we present a selection of the very best international fare in our World music round-up. Come with us!
**Michael Beek** *Reviews editor*

### This month's critics

John Allison, Nicholas Anderson, Terry Blain, Kate Bolton-Porciatti, Garry Booth, Geoff Brown, Michael Church, Christopher Cook, Martin Cotton, Christopher Dingle, Misha Donat, Jessica Duchen, Rebecca Franks, Malcolm Hayes, Julian Haylock, Claire Jackson, Daniel Jaffé, Erica Jeal, Berta Joncus, Erik Levi, Natasha Loges, Jon Lusk, Andrew McGregor, David Nice, Roger Nichols, Bayan Northcott, Ingrid Pearson, Steph Power, Anthony Pryer, Paul Riley, Jan Smaczny, Sarah Urwin Jones, Kate Wakeling, Alexandra Wilson

**KEY TO STAR RATINGS**

★★★★★ Outstanding
★★★★ Excellent
★★★ Good
★★ Disappointing
★ Poor

RECORDING OF THE MONTH

# This Handel is the gift that keeps on giving

Harry Bicket and his go-to cast of stellar singers do it again with a remarkable take on *La Resurrezione*, says ***Berta Joncus***

## Handel

**La Resurrezione**
Sophie Bevan, Lucy Crowe, Iestyn Davies, Hugo Hymas, Ashley Riches; The English Concert/Harry Bicket
***Linn Records CKD675 117:18 mins (2 discs)***

*La Resurrezione* is one of Handel's greatest works, and Harry Bicket has gifted us its greatest recording. In 1708, the young Handel, a hot favourite of Roman patrons, created a score bursting with confidence and sensuality. Bicket and his stellar cast embrace Handel's radical approach, turning sacred figures – the Angel (soprano Lucy Crowe), Lucifer (bass Ashley Riches), Mary Magdalene (soprano Sophie Bevan), Mary Cleophas (countertenor Iestyn Davies) and John the Evangelist (tenor Hugo Hymas) – into intensely dramatic ones. Handel gave instruments their own actor-like parts, which The English Concert deliver ravishingly.

Beyond two star castratos, Handel had a huge orchestra and superb libretto to work with. None other than Arcangelo Corelli led a 37-man string section, complemented by woodwinds, two trumpets and a trombone. Librettist Carlo Sigismondo Capece's scenes toggle between spiritual and historical persons: the Angel and Lucifer duel, while Christ's followers mourn his crucifixion and rejoice in his resurrection. Bicket meets all this history on his own terms, keeping his band's string section its usual size and casting just one male alto for the two castratos. But he matches Handel in daring, with dazzling bravura airs giving way to slow movements of a revelatory stillness.

One of Handel's biggest experiments in *La Resurrezione*

Top class Cleophas: Iestyn Davies gives a performance of full-throated virtuosity

BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE CHOICE

TOMMY GA-KEN WONG, VICTORIA CADISCH

was to have the overture run into its first aria, sung by the Angel. Crowe answers this stroke with her own: in the repeat she bounds up into the stratosphere, where she pirouettes elegantly into a sustained top C sharp final note. Such divine vocalism is characteristic of Crowe's overall performance – technically jaw-dropping, dramatically riveting and musically radiant.

While the Angel soars, Lucifer rages and Riches dignifies his parodic extremes with easy execution. Magdalene's and Cleophas's numbers are musically simpler but affectively more complex, a challenge which Bevan and Davies take as an opportunity. Magdalene has the most arias, and the most mournful ones, with a stripped-back accompaniment that throws the instrumental solos into stark relief; for these, Bicket suspends the pulse to accommodate Bevan drawing out the hushed lyricism of Handel's line. She applies vibrato to straight tone, rather than the other way around, to convey the intensity of Magdalene's expressions. Cleophas shares and alters her moods, nudging Magdalene into hope in their exquisite duet 'Dolci chiodi' before pivoting to joy in 'Vedo il ciel che più sereno'. In the A section repeat of this brisk number, Davies upshifts into full-throated virtuosity, dispatching passagi-stuffed melodies wholly unlike Handel's original. Oddly for a work led by castratos, *La Resurrezione* climaxes in the tenor's final number, 'Caro figlio'. Here Hymas, gorgeous throughout as John the Evangelist, creates five minutes of blissed-out lyricism, languidly winding his melody around that of the violincello.

> Such divine vocalism is characteristic of Lucy Crowe's overall performance

You will recognise much of this music: Handel stole from earlier works to compose *La Resurrezione*, from which he then self-borrowed for decades. The artists also plunder Handel's score, enriching us with a trove of their own ideas.

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

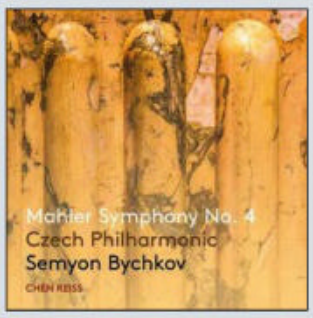
## An interview with Lucy Crowe

**How did you prepare for this role and its vocal fireworks?**
I love singing the fireworks! I find it incredibly fulfilling. There's something very diferent to singing the Angel in this piece, as opposed to singing Rodelinda or Cleopatra, because she represents everything that is good and just in the world; there isn't an underlying layer of emotion. I'm trying to portray honesty, truth, innocence and purity as much as possible. So it's about being lucid, transparent and singing the notes with integrity.

**Is the first aria one of the biggest challenges for you?**
That aria is such a tour-de-force. When it came to recording it was challenging, because the oboes and I have to be tightly together. So it took a while to get us in sync. When it's a one-off performance it doesn't matter so much, but when you're recording something you want to make it as perfect as possible. The other arias she has are just beautiful little pockets of joy, really.

**You must have a good rapport with these musicians by now...**
I've worked with The English Concert ever since I left college; it was Trevor Pinnock who brought me on board as a soloist, and I've been working with them ever since. It's such a joy to work with not only a conductor who is brilliant, but all of the orchestra; they are such virtuosic players and they play as one. You really do feel massively supported, but equally you raise your game because of the level that they play to; it is truly exceptional.

ORCHESTRAL CHOICE




# Magical start to Bychkov's Mahler cycle

The Czech Phil delivers a golden Fourth Symphony recording, says ***David Nice***

## Mahler

**Symphony No. 4**

Chen Reiss (soprano); Czech Philharmonic/Semyon Bychkov

*Pentatone PTC 5186 972 56:49 mins*

Alchemy has been working wonders in Prague. In the case of the Czech Philharmonic it's simply an adapted sound building on magnificent traditions. But I always thought Semyon Bychkov, now one of the greats, was more a creature of earth and fire than air. A perfect Barbican performance of Dvořák's Eighth, floating and gleaming so gorgeously, told me otherwise; and its counterpart in Mahler's symphonies, the Fourth, is cast in the same golden mould. In both interpretations, every tempo choice seems perfect. Bychkov doesn't make an adagioesque meal of the radiant song that frames the innocence-versus-experience third movement. He also makes sure that soprano Chen Reiss, poised and enchanting in the 'child's view of heaven' that ends the work, can manage the longer phrases which sometimes get broken in two.

**Chen Reiss is poised and enchanting in the work's finale**

It is a fascinating choice to launch a new symphonic cycle which the Czech Philharmonic more than merits; never forget that the late, much missed Jiří Bělohlávek, Bychkov's predecessor at the Czech Philharmonic, was always keen to point out that Mahler, brought up in Iglau (now Jihlava), was a Czech composer. The Fourth is a special case, encouraging chamber-musical dialogues, which have never sounded lovelier or at times spookier, spotlighting some magnificent principals, chiefly leader/concertmaster (a shame the players aren't listed), first horn, clarinet and an especially poignant oboe as the blue skies turn black in the slow movement. Dynamics from the quietest imaginable to the very loudest are perfectly handled by the Rudolfinum recording.

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

Timely choices: Semyon Bychkov's tempos are top notch

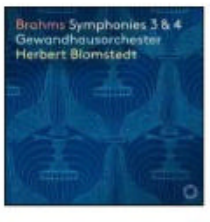
You can access thousands of reviews from our extensive archive on the BBC Music Magazine website at **www.classical-music.com**

## Brahms

**Symphonies Nos 3 & 4**

Gewandhausorchester Leipzig/ Herbert Blomstedt

*Pentatone PTC 5186 852 80:38 mins*




Even by the standards of a profession famous for its longevity, Herbert Blomstedt's staying-power is a phenomenon: he conducted these recordings in April last year, aged 93. A former principal conductor of Leipzig's Gewandhaus Orchestra (while merely in his seventies), he retains an honorary position with them, and the players' respect for his brand of seasoned musicianship is evident at every point. And something of this orchestra's fabled traditional sound – an emphasis on mellow shading, rather than the technicolor projection so widely favoured elsewhere – has survived unmistakably through recent decades. Exceptional recording quality, at once unexaggerated and hyper-vivid, captures these players' circle-squaring ability to combine superb technical clarity with rounded warmth of tone. The gorgeous tawny sound of the divided violas in the Fourth Symphony's *Andante moderato* second movement is one of many such moments.

Even so, there's a feeling here of something missing. You won't hear lovelier playing of Brahms's music, nor clearer presentation of its ceaselessly inventive inner workings. What doesn't come across as strongly is how these are two of the greatest symphonic masterworks ever to have been written down. The Third Symphony, generally the more equable-natured of the two, loses out less in this respect. But in the Fourth's tumultuous *Allegro giocoso* third movement, the music's sheer wildness isn't fully conveyed. And the finale's variation sequence here doesn't leave you feeling awestruck at its relentless cumulative power, in the way that a top-flight interpretation unerringly does. *Malcolm Hayes*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

## E Mayer

**Overtures; Symphony No. 3, 'Sinfonie Militair'**

Mecklenburgische Staatskapelle Schwerin/Mark Rohde

*MDG MDG9012239 (CD/SACD) 68:28 mins*

Last year saw the German publication of a book whose title translates as 'Emilie Mayer: Europe's Greatest Female Composer'. Certainly, it's cheering to find a 19th-century woman talented, ambitious and wealthy enough to sustain the production of eight symphonies, seven quartets and more than a dozen concert overtures.

But a sense of proportion is still useful for a composer whose fetching melodic lines often jostle next to the banal, and whose sense of structure could sometimes be described as either experimental or lacking.

The strongest piece in this latest Mayer anthology, the unusual *Sinfonie militair* (premiered in 1850), features its own clumsy stitchings, though virtues rise to the top with the *Adagio*'s lyrical elegance, the *Scherzo*'s restless energy, and the *Finale*'s military panache. Mark Rohde and his lively Schwerin orchestra also make a decent case for the boldly characterised *Faust Overture* of 1880 and much of the D minor Overture, a shape-shifting romantic drama that ends with an uplifting harmonic sequence that quite takes the listener by surprise. There's modest joy, too, in the C major Overture, at least once the composer concentrates on the piece's vigorous main theme.

If only the muscular and imaginative weren't so jumbled up with the insipid or flat-footed; and if only the thinking wasn't so itchy, with bits and pieces coming and going just like the echoes of Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Donizetti. Emilie Mayer is certainly worth discovering and exploring; but let's politely put the highest superlatives to one side. *Geoff Brown*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★

## Pejačević

**Symphony; Piano Concerto***

*Peter Donohoe (piano); BBC Symphony Orchestra/Sakari Oramo

***Chandos CHSA 5299 (CD/SACD) 70:57 mins***

It's hardly surprising that the colourful life story of Croatian composer Dora Pejačević should have been fictionalised in a 1993 movie. Born in 1885 into an influential aristocratic family, Pejačević strongly rebelled against her background, becoming a fervent socialist and serving as an auxiliary nurse during World War I. Developing a strong passion for music at an early age, she studied with a number of prominent musicians in Germany, and was well on the way to establishing a prominent position in musical life during the 1920s when she died at the premature age of 38.

Pejačević's three-movement Piano Concerto, effectively the first significant work of that genre by any Croatian composer, boasts attractive melodies, warmly lush orchestration and technically demanding piano writing. Peter Donohoe revels in its manifold opportunities for virtuosic display, but also brings poetry and requisite tenderness to the beautifully lyrical writing in the slow movement.

The Symphony is even more impressive in extending Pejačević's range of expression with highly chromatic writing, most notably in the dissonant Introduction to the first movement, and some evocative solo woodwind passages in the ensuing *Andante sostenuto*. Occasionally, Pejačević's tendency to develop material through sequential repetition gets the better of her, but there is sufficient interest and variety in all four movements for this not to become a serious hindrance. Furthermore, Sakari Omaro and the BBC Symphony Orchestra, supported by Chandos's customary warm engineering, clearly believe in the work and deliver an extremely compelling performance. *Erik Levi*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

## Shostakovich

**The Age of Gold Suite; The Limpid Stream Suite; Tahiti Trot; Suite for Jazz Orchestra No. 1; Suite for Variety Orchestra**

Singapore Symphony Orchestra/Andrew Litton

***BIS BIS-2472 (CD/SACD) 69:14 mins***

Entitled *Jazz & Variety*, this album encompasses four of Shostakovich's more popular-style suites, mainly drawn from his ballet and theatre scores. These range from the poker-faced, Kurt Weill-like stylisation of 1920s dance music, complete with plunking banjo, in the *Suite for Jazz Orchestra* No. 1 (1934), via the Prokofiev-like burlesques of *The Age of Gold* – a 1930 ballet about the vicissitudes of a Soviet football team in the wicked West – to the more straightforwardly traditional ballet numbers of *The Limpid Stream* (1935/45) set on an idyllic collective farm, and the *Suite for Variety Orchestra* put together from various pieces from the 1950s.

One item, the Waltz from the *Jazz Suite*, recurs twice: more fully orchestrated in *The Limpid Stream*, and in yet a third arrangement with a different, more banal middle section, in the *Variety Suite*. The collection culminates in Shostakovich's twinkling orchestration of a version of 'Tea for Two', entitled *Tahiti Trot* (1927). Yet, in the middle of all these frolics, the searing intensity of the extended *Adagio* from *The Age of Gold* reminds us of the other, tragic side of Shostakovich.

Andrew Litton and the Singapore Symphony Orchestra lavish more care and subtlety on these pieces than the quality of invention in some of the music maybe deserves, additionally flattered by BIS's spacious recording – though the *Jazz Suite* might have more bite in a drier acoustic. Still, this is a superior collection for those who relish this lighter, sometimes naughtier side of Shostakovich. *Bayan Northcott*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★

Characterful conducting: Lahav Shani contrasts Shostakovich with Weill

## Shostakovich • Weill

**Shostakovich:** Symphony No. 5; **Weill:** Symphony No. 2

Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra/Lahav Shani

***Warner Classics 9029547834 75:39 mins***

The contrast between the spiky opening gesture and the more sustained response at the start of Weill's Second leaps out of the speakers. That's a feature of the work and the performance throughout, although the balance of the texture sometimes relegates the all-important wind parts to a back seat. Lahav Shani drives the music forward for most of the movement, but slows too much for the *Un poco meno mosso*, and never quite regains momentum afterwards. The slow movement is much better controlled, and there's some elegant solo playing in some of Weill's most affecting melodies, which could sometimes be more forward. And a drier acoustic would have benefited the finale, but the character of the music emerges strongly, with its grotesque echoes of Prokofiev and Shostakovich, and a nicely tapered acceleration in the final section.

That's a studio recording, but the Shostakovich comes live from a pair of concerts. As with the Weill, the opening is arresting, though tempo and tension flag as the long introduction continues. After that, the arc of speed and dynamic, increasing then subsiding, is expertly done, with just a touch of congestion in sound at the climaxes. And the contrast between the satirically sinister waltz and the passionate lament in the central movements is pointed up with some very concentrated playing. The finale, though, can't decide whether its ending is triumphant or doggedly mechanistic: a pity, as the trajectory has been certain up to that point. But much to enjoy, and the audience certainly did. *Martin Cotton*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★

UMBERTO NICOLETTI, MARCO BORGGREVE

Recorded riches: Kurt Masur left us a remarkable legacy

# From the archives

*Andrew McGregor* finds much to enjoy in an expansive collection of recordings from conductor Kurt Masur

'I think my best characteristic is stubbornness…' – perhaps not the kindest quotation to lead with in the booklet essay, but it's a penetrating insight from Kurt Masur. He had to be stubborn to evolve from a shy teenager with a physical condition that prevented him pursuing the piano, surviving two totalitarian regimes, to become *Kapellmeister* of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and chief conductor of the New York Philharmonic, the main orchestras featured in ***The Complete Warner Classics Edition*** (Warner Classics 9029661155; 70 CDs). There's strength and depth and mellow maturity to the sound in almost everything here that speaks powerfully of Masur's reputation for hard work, intense rehearsal and that stubborn refusal to take the path of least resistance.

You could begin with Brahms's Fourth Symphony, a rugged yet lyrical account with a magnificent finale. The Schumann symphonies with the LPO are richly rewarding, the Tchaikovsky cycle has a kind of old-world authenticity and you mustn't miss Masur's Liszt: real authority in the tone poems and the *Faust* and *Dante* Symphonies, drawing radiant tone from the Leipzig players.

There's the special connection with Mendelssohn, Masur's predecessor in Leipzig, and about whose music he was evangelical: richness, warmth and lightness in the symphonies, and a remarkable live recording of *Elijah* from Tel Aviv. There's a humanity to it that also illuminates powerful performances of three other major choral works live in New York: Brahms's *German Requiem*, with its sense of hope and consolation; Britten's *War Requiem*, whose resonances for a German who survived active service in the Second World War must be immense. And Shostakovich's 'Babi Yar', bookended by Yevtushenko reading his own poems; this meant so much to the conductor who worked behind the Iron Curtain and played his own part in the peaceful reunification of Germany. Humane, heartfelt, serious… and stubborn. An utterly admirable musician.

**Andrew McGregor is the presenter of Radio 3's *Record Review*, broadcast each Saturday morning from 9am until 11.45am**

## Tchaikovsky

**Symphony No. 1, 'Winter Daydreams'; Italian Capriccio; Eugene Onegin – Waltz**

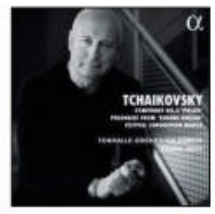
Tonhalle Orchestra/Paavo Järvi

*Alpha Classics ALPHA 838 64:59 mins*

**Symphony No. 3, 'Polish'; Eugene Onegin – Polonaise; Festival Coronation March**

Tonhalle Orchestra/Paavo Järvi

*Alpha Classics ALPHA 839 53:35 mins*




Paavo Järvi does Tchaikovsky the supreme good service of allowing his earlier symphonies to stand without a sense of special pleading or undue podium tinkering. The string sound is open rather than weighty, the woodwind direct and uncoiffured and brass meticulously balanced. Try the heartfelt slow movement of 'Winter Daydreams' and everything is carefully sculpted, gently vibratoed, virtually portamento-free and sensitively shaped, the following scherzo light-as-air and refined (the enchanting waltzing central section kept on an emotionally even keel), and the finale free of bombast, with even the lower brass's crowning premonition of 'Anchors Aweigh' discreetly prevented from leaping out of one's speakers.

The 'Polish' is a more difficult work to bring off convincingly, and once again Järvi does a wonderful job of clearly delineating where the music is going, allowing Tchaikovsky's refulgent textures to emerge unfettered, with an emotionally lighter spring in their step than usual. Given nowhere to hide, the outer movement's elastoplastic contrapuntal sequences will leave structuralists shaking their heads in despair, yet there is a playful honesty about Järvi's approach that imbues these well-trodden musical paths with a bracing freshness. Those seeking a sense of burning imperative, of this music arriving hot off the press, of searing emotional urgency and pulsating rhythmic drive, should look elsewhere – to Maazel (Decca), Muti (EMI/Warner) or Karajan (DG), for example – yet if you prefer exhilarating balletic nuances, free of expressive overload, then Järvi is your man. The extras are similarly expert in execution and keen-sighted in conception. *Julian Haylock*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★

## Vaughan Williams

**Sinfonia antartica*; Symphony No. 9; Norfolk Rhapsody No. 1; The Lark Ascending†**

†Lyn Fletcher (violin); *Sophie Bevan (soprano); *Members of the Hallé Choir; Hallé Orchestra/Mark Elder

*Halle CD HLD 7558 106:49 mins (2 discs)*

The Hallé premiered *Sinfonia antartica* in January 1953, and recorded it six months later. John Barbirolli was the conductor on both occasions, and his interpretation is generally more visceral and urgent than Mark Elder's in this Hallé live performance.

Elder, by contrast, puts greater emphasis on the forbidding vastness of the Antarctic ice-scapes encountered by Scott and his colleagues on their ill-fated expedition. His opening Prelude distils a sense of panoramic awe, which deepens in the central *Lento* to imperilled trepidation as the glacier threatens. The intervening *Scherzo*, with its famous waddling penguins, is perhaps a touch deliberate, but Elder's *Epilogue* is powerfully shaped, the ghostly fade-to-white at the conclusion chillingly inscrutable. The Hallé's playing mixes grandeur and tragedy, with Sophie Bevan's siren soprano and the voiceless chorus atmospherically integrated.

The Ninth Symphony, Vaughan Williams's last, is a studio recording, but if anything even more strongly committed. Elder is keenly attuned to the dark uncertainties that haunt the work, and is particularly effective in an ominous account of the opening movement, and a combustible *Scherzo*. The sound is slightly fuller than in the dryish Bridgewater Hall for the *Antartica*.

Both *Norfolk Rhapsody* No. 1 and *The Lark Ascending* come from an earlier Hallé release, but are well worth revisiting. It concludes Elder and the Hallé's cycle of Vaughan Williams's symphonies, one which has been consistently gripping in its trenchant honesty and patient empathy for the composer's idiom. *Terry Blain*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★

GETTY

## Musa Italiana

**Mendelssohn:** Symphony No. 4, 'Italian'; **Mozart:** Overtures – Mitridate, rè di Ponto; Ascanio in Alba; Lucio Silla; **Schubert:** Overtures in Italian Style, D 590 & 591

Filarmonica della Scala/ Riccardo Chailly

*Decca 485 2944 62:42 mins*

Riccardo Chailly and the Filarmonica della Scala – the symphony orchestra founded in 1982 by Claudio Abbado and containing many of the opera house's musicians – have been committing their pick of Italian music, well known and lesser, to recordings in the last few years. Now they turn to non-Italians composing in the Italian style – or at least under its influence. Recorded during the pandemic, fully masked-up, on a specially constructed stage over the stalls of La Scala, Milan to facilitate distancing for the musicians, the acoustic is notably resonant.

The thrill here is Chailly's Mendelssohn, the composer's 'Italian' Symphony written during a Grand Tour of Europe in 1829, when he was in his early twenties. Here it's given a driven account, the Filarmonica capturing Mendelssohn's sense of dazzling youthful energy, fleet of foot. Performed in the revised version Mendelssohn completed the year after the premiere in 1833 (which itself was only published in 1997), it is thoroughly convincing in Chailly's hands, despite the planned revisions to the first movement never having taken place. The carefully stressed hints of dark clouds the Filarmonica give under the energy and lightness of the *Allegro* hint effectively at a sense of heightened drama in the final movement.

Overtures dominate the rest of this recording – Schubert's two Overtures in the Italian style, in C and D, inspired by hearing Rossini, are a relatively sober interlude, but of the three Mozart teenage overtures written for Milan – *Mitridate, rè di Ponto*, *Asciano in Alba* and *Lucia di Silla* – it's the latter which engages, filled with a dramatic drive as impelled, here, as the Mendelssohn.

*Sarah Urwin Jones*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★

## Ready or Not

**Bacewicz:** Concerto for Strings; **Casulana:** Il desiderio; **Liz Knowles:** Treehouse; Jig for John #2; Fore Street; **Akenya Seymour:** Fear the Lamb; **Strozzi:** Diporti di Euterpe

Sophie Michaux (mezzo-soprano); Palaver Strings

*Azica ACD-71342 49:20 mins*

Palaver Strings takes its name from a West African 'palaver hut', a place in which people traditionally gathered to resolve conflicts and engage in discussion. And this lively debut recording from the American string ensemble carries the concept through to its programme, which sets female composers from across history in dialogue with each other.

I'll deal with the quibbles first. With around 50 minutes of music, there is surely room for another piece to fill out the album. It's a shame, too, not to have a text included for Barbara Strozzi's *Lagrime mie*, sung here with febrile intensity by mezzo-soprano Sophie Michaux, with a beefed-up string accompaniment arranged by Adam Jacob Simon. Nor does the recorded sound give the strings enough space to breathe.

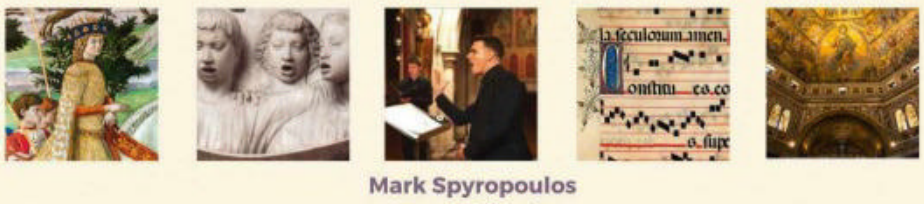
Where the release does score highly is with its lively performances, given without a conductor. Bacewicz's Concerto for String Orchestra flies off the page, with the players' energy matching the vigour of the Polish composer's writing. A brief taste of music by Maddalena Casulana, who set a precedent when she became the first woman to publish her own music, left me wanting more, while the folk language of Liz Knowles and Elizabeth Moore's set of fiddle tunes – *Treehouse*, *Jig for John #2* and *Fore Street* – ends the disc in upbeat style.

Yet the most notable contribution is Akenya Seymour's *Fear the Lamb*, a three-movement piece telling the story of Emmett Till, the African-American teenage boy who was tortured and brutally murdered in 1955 as a result of racism. If not every moment is as musically telling as it might be, *Fear the Lamb* still hits its emotional mark. *Rebecca Franks*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★

LP / SINGLES COLLECTIONS
TOP PRICES PAID
WILL COLLECT
1950 - 80
CLASSICAL — ROCK — POP — BLUES
FOLK — JAZZ
AVANT GARDE
WORLD MUSIC

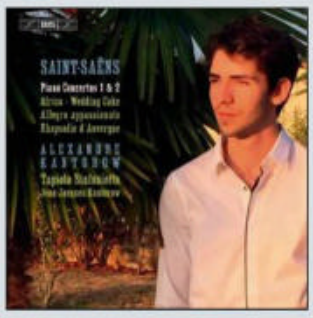
e-mail: j_r_lowe@hotmail.com
tel: 01333 311949

FLORENCE CHORAL COURSE 2022
18-24 JULY 2022
The Medici Archive Project is pleased to announce our newest course for summer 2022: the Florence Choral Course. Housed in Palazzo Alberti in the heart of Florence, the course is an intensive week of choral and vocal training combined with an exploration of this music's historical context. Led by some of the finest choral and vocal instructors, along with academics of the Medici Archive Project, the Florence Choral Course is a unique opportunity to sing the magnificent choral repertoire of Renaissance Italy, and to explore its history with an introduction to academic scholarship.

Mark Spyropoulos
Course Director
FEATURING MASTERCLASSES WITH

Dame Emma Kirkby

Maestro Massimo Palombella
For full details on how to apply, please visit www.medici.org or contact us at education@medici.org
the MEDICI ARCHIVE PROJECT

CONCERTO CHOICE




# The Kantorows set the bar in Saint-Saëns concertos

This sparking showcase from the father-and-son team is truly outstanding, says ***Christopher Dingle***

Breathtaking virtuoso: Alexandre Kantorow makes light work of it

## Saint-Saëns

**Piano Concertos Nos 1 & 2; Valse-Caprice, 'Wedding Cake'; Allegro appassionato, Op. 70; Rapsodie d'Auvergne; Africa, Op. 89**

Alexandre Kantorow (piano); Tapiola Sinfonietta/ Jean-Jacques Kantorow

*BIS BIS-2400 (CD/SACD) 85:02 mins*

This is very special. The previous disc of Saint-Saëns's piano concertos from the father-and-son team of conductor Jean-Jacques and pianist Alexandre Kantorow featured exceptionally impressive performances of the Third, Fourth and Fifth concertos. This jam-packed and equally outstanding second volume includes the first two concertos along with the composer's shorter works for piano and orchestra. From the fervent *Allegro appassionato* via the frolics of the *Rapsodie d'Auvergne* and 'Wedding Cake' *Valse-Caprice* to *Africa*'s extraordinary travelogue and, of course, the concertos, musicality is to the fore.

The virtuosity is breathtaking, yet nothing is hard-pressed, for the younger Kantorow has that hallmark of the greatest performers of always appearing to have plenty of time. The flourishes swooping down and back up in the First Concerto's finale sound as effortless as if he were brushing his fingers across the strings. The opening of the Second Concerto is magisterially thoughtful. Rather than a tub-thumping, hell-for-leather rush, the conclusion sparkles with exhilarating joie-de-vivre, for everyone is patently having immense fun.

> The opening of the Second Concerto is magisterially thoughtful

The Tapiola Sinfonietta play their part, from the First Concerto's opening horn calls and string shimmers or the creamy bassoon solo in the same work's sublimely heartfelt slow movement, to the thrillingly incisive string interjections in *Africa*. With the entirety of this packed hybrid-SACD captured wonderfully by BIS's engineers, every detail is clear, yet sounds natural. In short, this disc completes a Saint-Saëns piano concerto set that has few peers and none that are better.

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

You can access thousands of reviews from our extensive archive on the BBC Music Magazine website at **www.classical-music.com**

SASHA GUSOV

## Richard Birchall • Mozart

**Mozart:** Clarinet Concerto; Clarinet Quintet; **Richard Birchall:** Clarinet Concerto

Michael Collins (clarinet); Wigmore Soloists; Philharmonia Orchestra/ Robin O'Neill

*BIS BIS-2647 (CD/SACD) 81:37 mins*

Until recently, Mozart's Clarinet Concerto and Quintet were generally played on the 'A' instrument (rather than the standard B-flat clarinet). However, the works were originally intended for the basset clarinet, a member of the clarinet family favoured by Mozart's friend Anton Stadler. Having already recorded the concerto using both the de-facto clarinet (DG) and the basset (Chandos), Collins gives the old war horse another trot around the paddock in this glorious new album, released to coincide with the clarinettist's 60th-birthday celebrations. As clarinettist-conductor, Collins leads the Philharmonia in a particularly ravishing *Rondo*.

In the Quintet, Collins is joined by newly formed ensemble Wigmore Soloists, the *crème de la crème* of chamber players who in this beautifully produced interpretation take the much-loved piece to new heights. Collins elicits a delicious, resonant tone throughout; the clarinet is never upstaged by its string quartet partner.

The basset (not to be confused with the bass clarinet) is having a belated comeback. Clarinettist-composer Mark Simpson is a keen supporter (he commissioned Simon Holt's *Joy Beast*), Thomas Adès gave it a starring role in *Alchymia* and now Richard Birchall adds his colourful concerto to the repertoire. Written specially for Collins, Birchall's concerto takes its inspiration from Escher's endless staircases and, perhaps, the Schumanns' love of ciphers: the first clarinet motif features the sequence E flat – C – B – E, which in German notation spells out Es – C – H – E. The lyrical second movement culminates in a virtuosic finale; Collins dazzles in the snappy, spiralling melodies. *Claire Jackson*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★

## Hummel • Mozart • Vanhal

**Hummel:** Bassoon Concerto; **Mozart:** Bassoon Concerto; **Vanhal:** Bassoon Concerto No. 2
Sophie Dervaux (bassoon); Mozarteumorchester Salzburg
*Berlin Classics 0302341BC 58:54 mins*

Mozart was the greatest composer ever to write one, so his Bassoon Concerto has inevitably remained the core work of its repertoire. Yet he was only 18 when he composed it and it is relatively unsubtle compared with his later piano or wind concertos. But then, as the Vienna Philharmonic's bassoonist Sophie Dervaux writes in the booklet notes, the 18th-century bassoon itself was a limited, uneven instrument, not to be improved until the 1830s. In her vivacious new recording with the warm-toned Orchestra of the Mozarteum Salzburg, which she also directs, she wields a full-toned modern bassoon with brilliance and sensitivity, though some listeners might prefer a slightly thinner-toned, more reedy sounding instrument in this music.

As a child prodigy, Johann Nepomuk Hummel was tutored by Mozart, and continued to compose in a kind of loosened, romanticised Mozart style. His three-movement Grand Concerto in F major dates from around 1805. Although larger in scale and more virtuosic than the Mozart, charm predominates over grandeur and Dervaux brings an irresistible lilt to its country-dance finale. Johann Baptist Vanhal was respected by both Mozart and Haydn. His vast output is still only partly published and this recording is apparently the first ever of his Concerto No. 2, in which trumpets and drums in the outer movements bring a genuine touch of grandeur. Floridly written for the soloist, it's an attractive addition to the 18th-century repertoire.
*Bayan Northcott*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★

## Mendelssohn • Sinding

**Mendelssohn:** Violin Concerto in E minor; **Sinding:** Violin Concerto No. 1; Romance in D, Op. 100
Lea Birringer (violin); Hofer Symphoniker/Hermann Bäumer
*Rubicon RCD1081 60:34 mins*

Unexpected pleasures: Pina Napolitano is impressive in Brahms

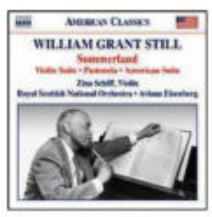
Sinding is remembered almost exclusively for one work: *Rustle of Spring*, which once graced the music stands of many a piano, and shows that the composer had a flair for the character piece. Given a broader canvas, he tends to sprawl. The opening of this concerto has a superficial resemblance to the finale of Bruch's First Concerto, which is wrong-footing, leading to expectations which aren't fulfilled. Although they're never unattractive, themes are rarely memorable, and the use of sequence, often changing key with unseemly rapidity, leaves an unsettled feeling. The most effective of the three movements is the central *Andante*, where the slower pace allows the music to unfold in a more organic fashion. It also brings out the best in Lea Birringer, who plays with intensity and a sense of the ebb and flow of the music, but could employ a greater tonal range. That also applies in the *Romance*, whose title gives away the overall feeling of the music – but it is just that: an overall feeling.

What a contrast with the acknowledged mastery of Mendelssohn's Concerto, where the musical direction is always clear, and the melodic and rhythmic profiles have real strength. Birringer brings out the lightness of the textures, but sometimes risks skating over the surface of the music. The finale in particular has a rushed feeling, not helped by some lapses of ensemble and, once again, the *Andante* shows the greatest sympathy in its pacing. In a crowded field, there are more involving versions available. *Martin Cotton*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★

## Still

**Summerland; Violin Suite; Pastorela; American Suite; Threnody: In Memory of Jean Sibelius; Serenade etc**
Zina Schiff (violin), Royal Scottish National Orchestra/Avlana Eisenberg
*Naxos 8.559867 58:02 mins*




William Grant Still Jr (1895-1978) was a significant pioneer within and beyond the 1920's Harlem Renaissance of Black culture. Dubbed the 'Dean of African-American Composers', among many groundbreaking achievements, in 1931 he was the first Black composer to be performed by a major US orchestra. The work performed remains Still's best known today: the first of five symphonies comprising just some of the estimated 200 pieces he produced. Those performed here by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, conducted by Avlana Eisenberg and variously joined by her mother, solo violinist Zina Schiff, offer a beguiling portrait of his stylistic journey between 1918 and 1965.

Twin, three-movement pillars are the *American Suite* (c1918) – Still's first-ever orchestral work – and *Violin Suite* (1943). Through these, one can see his development of an already confident melodic lyricism into a bold marriage of contrasts encompassing blues and hymnody in alternating lush, sweeping arcs and jaunty, asymmetric tunes.

From the short, romping *Quit Dat Fool'nish* (1935) and ballad-inspired *Can't You Line'Em* (1940) to the sumptuous orchestral *Serenade* (1957), each work has a yearning optimism that's wrung to effect. Schiff, although a little coarsely recorded in *Summerland* (No. 2 from *3 Visions*, 1936), is most captivating in the languid 'violin poem' *Pastorela* (1946) – while the 1965 orchestral *Threnody: In Memory of Jean Sibelius* is at once haunting and celebratory. Briefest but most poignant, the 1945 *Fanfare for the 99th Fighter Squadron* is a tribute to the 992 Black Tuskegee Airmen who served in World War II. *Steph Power*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★

## Brahms The Progressive, Vol. 2

**Brahms:** Piano Concerto No. 2; **Webern:** Concerto for Nine Instruments, Op. 24
Pina Napolitano (piano); Lithuanian National Symphony/ Modestas Pitrėnas
*Odradek ODRCD413 58:52 mins*

Pina Napolitano borrows the title of her album, *Brahms the Progressive*, from a famous 1947 article by Schoenberg. What Schoenberg particularly admired in Brahms was the asymmetrical nature of his music, and although at first glance nothing could seem further from the expansiveness and grandeur of Brahms's four-movement Second Piano Concerto than the concision and crystalline precision of Webern's Concerto Op. 24, both have in common the notion of perpetual variation which was another feature of Brahms's music that appealed to Schoenberg.

Webern's isn't a concerto in the conventional sense, but a chamber piece in which the piano is just one of the nine instruments that contribute to the musical argument on entirely equal terms. Its slow movement, with the piano accompanying the remaining members of the ensemble in caressing two-note phrases, seems distantly to hark back to Brahms's late piano intermezzos. It is finely played here, in what is altogether a warm and affectionate account of this seminal work.

The Brahms receives an impressive performance, too, though Napolitano perhaps lacks that final ounce of intensity the music needs in the impetuously dramatic cadenza-like passage which so startlingly breaks the spell of the concerto's relaxed opening pages. The uncredited cello soloist in the slow movement plays with admirable tenderness, and the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra makes a fine contribution, with its principal conductor Modestas Pitrėnas showing an unfailing grasp of the music's overall structure throughout. Altogether, this disc was a real and unexpected pleasure. *Misha Donat*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★

## Cello Concertos from Northern Germany

**Works by CF Abel, Grauel, JW Hertel and Mara**
Gulrim Choï (cello); Ensemble Diderot
*Audax ADX11200 62:05 mins*

The music on this recording belongs to the epoque of the flute-playing Prussian king, Frederick the Great. Indeed, two of the composers, Ignác František Mara and Markus Heinrich Grauel were cellists in the king's Berlin orchestra. Carl Friedrich Abel was its leading viola da gambist before he left for London where in the mid 1760s he co-founded with JC Bach the successful Bach-Abel concert series. While the fourth composer here, Johann Wilhelm Hertel had no direct association with either orchestra he was on friendly terms with several of the most prominent Berlin musicians including CPE Bach and Franz Benda, leader of Frederick's orchestra and Hertel's violin teacher.

Paisiello with pizzazz: Raffaele La Ragione reframes the mandolin

BARBARA TRINCONE

The four concertos offer uninterrupted if undemanding pleasure, and provide a faithful overview of the Berlin style of the time. The Mara and Grauel pieces are world-premiere recordings, but it is the Abel and Hertel works that are of greatest interest. Soloist Gulrim Choï in her accompanying essay draws a parallel in the Hertel concerto with CPE Bach's north-German *Empfindsamer Stil* (sensitive style). Perhaps so, but it is a mild ingredient wholly lacking the distinctive, original personality of Bach's music. The Abel concerto, for which a version for flute also exists, is attractive for its amiable melodic content, and at times striking for its exploration of higher registers in the solo part. Choï is a fluent and sensitive advocate for these rarities and is stylishly supported by the strings of Ensemble Diderot directed by its leader, Johannes Pramsohler. *Nicholas Anderson*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★

## Mandolin On Stage

**Galuppi:** Il mondo alla roversa – Sinfonia; **Haydn:** Sinfonia in D, Hob.I:106 – Allegro; **Hummel:** Mandolin Concerto in G; **Lecce:** Concerto in G; **Paisiello:** La serva padrona – Sinfonia; Concerto for Mandolin and Strings in E flat; **Vivaldi:** Concerto in C, RV425
Raffaele La Ragione (mandolin); Il Pomo d'Oro/Francesco Corti
*Arcana A524 66:56 mins*

This disc spotlights the mandolin, not as the tremulous instrument used to accompany Neapolitan songs but as a major protagonist that inspired works by some of Europe's leading Baroque and Classical composers. The four concertos featured here – by Paisiello, Lecce, Vivaldi and Hummel – demonstrate the mandolin's 'spirit, musicality and virtuosity' as its popularity spread from Naples to Venice to Austria. Its chameleon colours are highlighted here by the use of three different types of mandolin: for the Paisiello and Lecce, soloist Raffaele La Ragione plays a Neapolitan instrument from the 1770s whose metal strings twangle with a brighter timbre than the mellower gut-strung instruments used for the Vivaldi and Hummel.

There's a convivial and intimate atmosphere in the one-to-a-part account of Vivaldi's C major concerto: a breezy energy drives its outer movements while the filigree *Largo* is delicate as Venetian lace. La Ragione despatches the virtuosic writing of Paisiello's E flat Concerto with real pizzazz, but the highlight of this work is the graceful *Larghetto* whose cantabile melodies he articulates with a quasi-vocal expressivity. There's a balletic quality to the G major concerto by Paisiello's fellow Neapolitan, Francesco Lecce, and the work is stylishly played – notwithstanding the little fluctuations of tempo in the opening *Allegro*. The band is fleshed out for the Hummel, whose stately Classical lines provide an elegant framework for La Ragione's decorous playing.

Interspersing the concertos are opera Sinfonias by Galuppi, Haydn and Paisiello, their pretty melodies and perky rhythms brought to pulsating life by Il Pomo d'Oro. *Kate Bolton-Porciatti*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

## Nazareno

**Bernstein:** Prelude, Fugue and Riffs; **Golijov:** Nazareno; **Stravinsky:** Ebony Concerto
Katia and Marielle Labèque (piano), Chris Richards (clarinet), London Symphony Orchestra/Simon Rattle
*LSO Live LSO0836 42:24 mins*

Do you want to party? This relatively brief disc features three ebullient works fusing jazz, Latin and classical traditions. Bernstein's rollicking *Prelude, Fugue and Riffs* is a Simon Rattle speciality and this is an utterly compulsive swing through this masterpiece of written-out jazz. Clarinettist Chris Richards is judiciously understated in Stravinsky's *Ebony Concerto*, having joyously let rip at the end of the Bernstein.

The disc's title work, *Nazareno*, has its roots in Golijov's *La Pasión según Marcos*, a visual and aural extravaganza from 2000 in which Cuban and Brazilian musical styles underpin an imaginative Passion setting. *Nazareno* is Gonzalo Grau's arrangement for two pianos and reduced orchestral forces of six of the Passion's 34 movements. Aside from the soulful 'Sur', the result is a foot-tapping, high-octane romp. Shorn of texts and surrounding context, the music gives no hint of its sacred origins or the earlier work's powerful reflection on state execution. The finale is rambunctiously exuberant in the hands of the evergreen Labèque sisters and Rattle for they are thoroughly relishing the carnival atmosphere. Should it make a difference that this celebration is the mob baying for blood? Do you still want to party? *Christopher Dingle*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

# Brompton's first Fine Musical Instruments auction of 2022 reached a sale total of £2,425,000

Two hundred instruments have now found a new playing life thanks to our global marketplace of buyers.

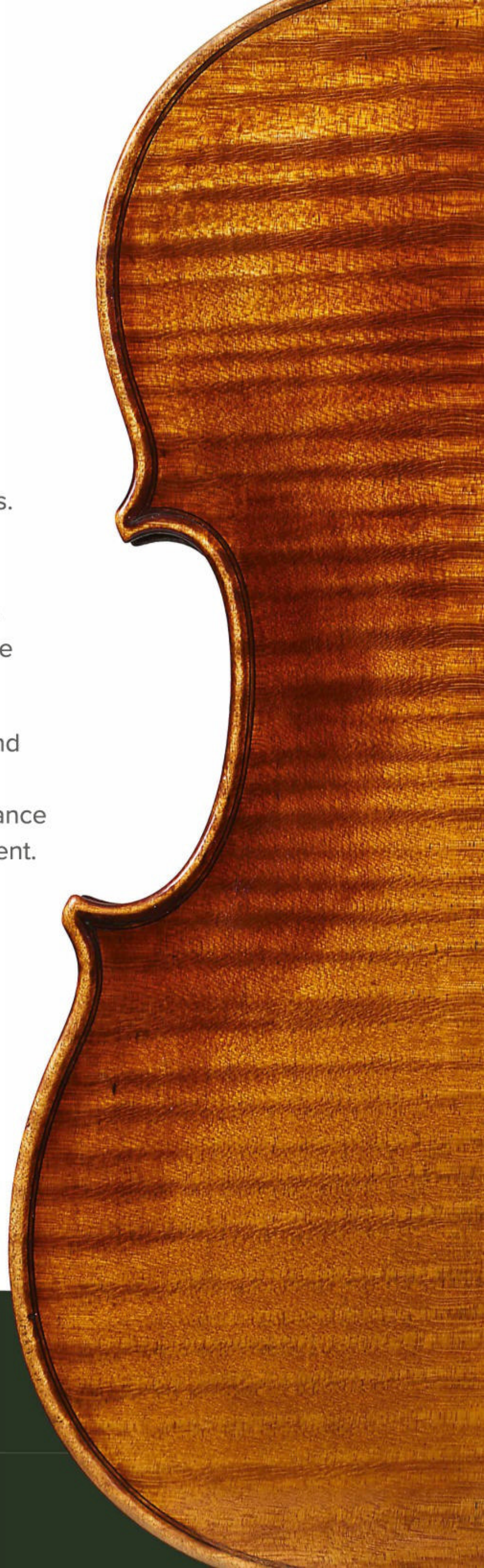
## Arrange a complimentary appraisal

If you have a violin, viola or cello that is just lying in its case, why not let Brompton's appraise it - you might be pleasantly surprised.

Make an appointment to see one of our specialists, and as part of our professional service we will provide a complimentary appraisal (without obligation) for insurance purposes and a current market value for your instrument.

Tel: **020 7580 9550**
Email: **valuations@bromptons.co**
Web: **www.bromptons.co**

*Pictured: A very fine and important Italian violin by Giovanni Francesco Pressenda, Turin 1834* ***recently sold by Brompton's for £354,000***.



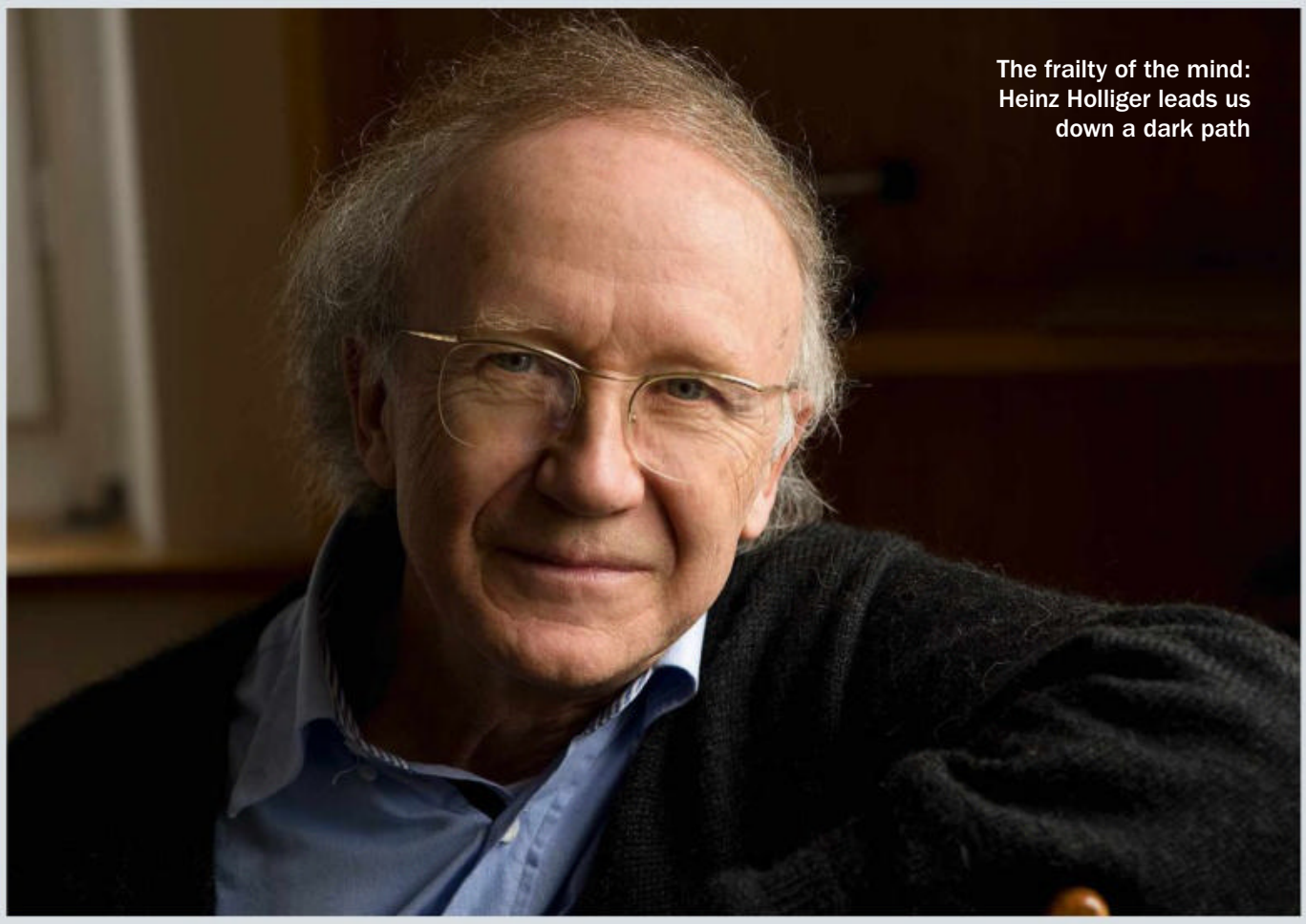
BROMPTON'S
FINE & RARE INSTRUMENTS

Brompton's Auctioneers, The First Floor, 33 Percy Street, London W1T 2DF

OPERA CHOICE

# Holliger's 'dream opera' is a bold riff on despair

The Swiss composer serves up an intense exploration of one man's mental desolation, says ***Steph Power***



The frailty of the mind: Heinz Holliger leads us down a dark path

PRISKA KETTERER

## Heinz Holliger

**Lunea**

Christian Gerhaher, Juliane Banse, Ivan Ludlow, Sarah Maria Sun, Annette Schönmüller; Basler Madrigalisten; Philharmonia Zürich/Heinz Holliger

*ECM 485 6322 97:33 mins (2 discs)*

Swiss composer and oboist Heinz Holliger (b1939) has long been fascinated by visionary artists who developed catastrophic mental disorders – among them, the Austrian Romantic poet Nikolaus Lenau (1802-50). In 2013 Holliger explored Lenau's feeling of *Weltschmerz* in a song cycle for baritone and piano (later ensemble), *Lunea*, setting 23 vivid, despairing sentences with searing concision. Titled the same, the 2017 'dream opera' incorporates these to shattering effect alongside further fragments from his personal papers, tautly assembled by librettist Händl Klaus into 23 'leaves' from the pages of Lenau's increasingly desperate life.

Conventional narrative is eschewed for a series of through-composed episodes which leap backwards and forwards in time, seen through the prism of Lenau's breakdown after a stroke in 1844. Holliger's intense and intricate score mirrors these processes down to small motivic details – and even words, as the leaves effectively burn to incomprehensibility through 'feuer' to 'reuef', and Lenau becomes 'lunea' or lunatic. Christian Gerhaher is astonishing in the virtuoso principal role, written (as was the song cycle) expressly for him, traversing the gamut of language and expression from song to speech. Yet this is an ensemble piece, in which past and present lovers and relations are wonderfully performed here, matched by an excellent Basler Madrigalisten and 34-piece Philharmonia Zürich conducted live by Holliger.

> Christian Gerhaher is astonishing in the virtuoso principal role

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

You can access thousands of reviews from our extensive archive on the BBC Music Magazine website at **www.classical-music.com**

## Handel/Hasse

**Caio Fabbricio**

Anna Gorbachyova-Ogilvie, Fleur Barron, Miriam Allan, Helen Charlston, Jess Dandy, Hannah Poulsom, Morgan Pearse; London Early Opera/Bridget Cunningham

*Signum SIGCD713 142:00 mins (2 discs)*

In this world-premiere recording, performing artists shine brightly in a *pasticcio* opera that was compromised at least partly by its first cast. In 1733, Handel wanted to arrange airs of Johann Adolf Hasse's *Caio Fabbricio*; his vocalists, however, insisted on inserting their favourite numbers, by whomever, at key moments. As a result, the music doesn't sweep the story along as in operas Handel wholly composed himself.

That said, Bridget Cunningham directs *Caio Fabbricio* brilliantly, leading from the harpsichord to energise the other players, and to give them space to exploit juicy passages. The singers' virtuosity and rich characterisations are delightful; particularly good are rising stars sopranos Miriam Allan and Anna Gorbachyova-Ogilvie and mezzo-soprano Fleur Barron. Each of the three has a vocal quality optimally suited to her character: Allan's luminous core for the heroine Sestia, Gorbachyova-Ogilvie's velvety textures for the lover Velusio, and Barron's dark hues for the brutish ruler Pirro.

Allan shines brightest, with fiery runs, boldly sustained top notes and the tenderness of her air 'Caro sposa'. Gorbachyova-Ogilvie and Barron deliver thrills as well, the former jousting in her last Act II aria with obbligato horns over which she triumphs, the latter smashing the final bars of her Act III finale by dropping to a baritone-like chest register.

*Caio Fabbricio* contains much fine music and compels fresh admiration of Handel's orchestral skills. Execution of this project is uniformly excellent. But the work appeals most when listened to as an 18th-century audience member would, passing over its far-fetched plot and episodic numbers to focus on the singers' arts. *Berta Joncus*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★

## Monteverdi

**Il ritorno di Ulisse in Patria** (DVD)

Charles Workman, Anicio Zorzi Giustiniani, Delphine Galou, John Daszak, Francesco Milancese, Marina de Liso, Eleonora Bellocci, Arianna Vendittelli, Gianluca Margheri; Accademia Bizantina/ Ottavio Dantone; dir. Robert Carsen (Florence, 2021)

***Dynamic DVD: 37927; Blu-ray: 57927 165 mins***

Monteverdi wrote this opera in 1640 for the public opera houses that had first opened in Venice three years earlier. It is a Greek story about the return of Ulysses from the Trojan War to his faithful wife Penelope. As such, it echoes slightly the academic origins of opera in Greek drama with its emphasis on declaimed narrative rather than lyrical arias and duets – though there is comic contrast in the scenes between the two servants Melanto and Eurimaco (delightfully characterised by Miriam Albano and Hugo Hymas).

The stars of the show are Charles Workman as Ulysses and Arianna Vendittelli as the goddess Minerva. Workman has real stage presence and can colour his voice to convey bravura, tenderness, reflectiveness and much else. Vendittelli's sound is bright and warm. In Act I her voice sparkles and flashes as she sonically and physically transforms from a mere mortal into a radiant goddess. (The actual physical transformation is poorly handled on stage.)

Delphine Galou rather disappoints as Penelope. Her singing is fluid but somewhat blank and hollow, and she acts as if she is giving information rather than fully feeling the drama. Additionally the cavernous stage and sombre lighting of the Pergola opera house in Florence do not aid communications here. We must turn to two DVD recordings by William Christie to sense the marvelous depth and power of this opera – one in 2002 from Aix-en-Provence (Virgin Classics) and the other in 2010 from the Teatro Real, Madrid (on Dynamic).

*Anthony Pryer*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★
**PICTURE & SOUND** ★★★

Richly virtuosic: Miriam Allan and London Early Opera shine in Handel

## Mozart

**Così fan tutte** (DVD)

Valentina Naforniţa, Thomas Hampson, Sven-Eric Bechtolf, Benedetta Torre, Vasilisa Berzhanskaya, Matthew Swensen, Mattia Olivieri; Orchestra e Coro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino/ Zubin Mehta; dir. Sven-Eric Bechtolf (Florence, 2021)

***Naxos DVD: 2.110726-27; Blu-ray: NBD0147V 188 mins***

This *Così* at the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, recorded in March 2021, was clearly a casualty of Covid, with an audience that sounds no more than two dozen. You can only marvel at the resilience of the young cast and Zubin Mehta keeping everything afloat. Only the often grainy quality of the visuals disappoints.

While Sven-Eric Bechtolf's production plays modish games with meta-theatricality, it is anchored in the 18th century. We begin in a theatre with Don Alfonso using a magic lantern to throw images of animals onto a curtain during the overture, but the slightly shabby costumes respect the 1790s, while suggesting, with the exception of the suitably Byronic Albanian outfits, that the four lovers and their tutor are short of a scudo or two.

Valentina Naforniţa and Vasilisa Berzhanskaya are a well-matched pair of Ferrarese sisters. Naforniţa's Fiordiligi is steadfast in 'Come Scoglio', and Berzhanskaya a deliciously naughty Dorabella in 'È amore un ladroncello', dancing on the table as she surrenders to temptation and showing us a shapely ankle. If Matthew Swensen's Ferrando has the edge over his friend Guglielmo, Swensen comes on apace once he is an Albanian. The chief disappointment is Thomas Hampson's Don Alfonso, neither as witty as he should be nor as cynical – and the voice is showing its age. Zubin Mehta, on the other hand, bubbles through the score as if he were in his twenties!

*Christopher Cook*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★
**PICTURE & SOUND** ★★★

## Verdi

**La traviata**

Lisette Oropesa, René Barbera, Lester Lynch; Sächsischer Staatsopernchor Dresden; Dresdner Philharmonie/ Daniel Oren

***Pentatone PTC 5186 956 (CD/SACD) 135:00 mins (2 discs)***

Highly acclaimed for her recent performances in *La traviata* at major opera houses in the US, Britain, Italy and Spain, the Cuban-American soprano Lisette Oropesa has now recorded the work. And what a dazzling interpretation it turns out to be! A lighter-voiced Violetta than many, leaning more towards the lyric than the dramatic, she sings with a consistent, shimmering beauty, effortless legato and an endearing sense of character. René Barbera, meanwhile, is a caring, expressive Alfredo, and the two voices are well matched in weight and tone, floating together delicately like spun gossamer as they take flight at the culmination of 'Un dì, felice, eterea'. By the end of the first scene, we genuinely believe that this adorable pair are falling in love; by the last, our hearts are breaking.

The Dresdner Philharmonie, under the direction of Daniel Oren, also deserves praise, creating an atmosphere of fevered hedonism in the opening party scene, allowing the music to breathe expansively in more lyrical moments and cranking up the tension as the estranged lovers spar against each other at the end of Act II. Lester Lynch's Germont sounds rather blustery, alas, but he gives a fine account of the oft-omitted 'No, non udrai rimproveri'.

There are many competing interpretations, many by classic casts of the past, but do find space in your collection for this new *Traviata* – and witness the blossoming of a soprano who is possibly the Violetta of our day. *Alexandra Wilson*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

CHORAL & SONG CHOICE

# A veritable treasure trove of Polish song

Jakub Józef Orliński and Michał Biel's *Farewells* is a real gem, says *John Allison*

## Farewells

**Songs by T Baird, Czyż, Karlowicz, Łukaszewski, Moniuszko and Szymanowski**
Jakub Józef Orliński (countertenor), Michał Biel (piano)
*Erato 9029626971 57:14 mins*

Jakub Józef Orliński's new album of Polish songs – his first recorded venture away from Baroque music – takes its title from a remarkable group of Pushkin settings by Henryk Czyż. Singing translations by Julian Tuwim, himself a great poet, Orliński sounds super-engaged with words and music, and any notion the listener may have about wanting to hear such repertoire sung by a mezzo with more amplitude soon evaporates. Instead, the rare beauty of Orliński's countertenor makes the whole recital an unusually introspective experience – and by any standards of Polish song recitals, this is an extraordinarily wide programme, one equally shaped by the excellent pianist Michał Biel.

Originally composed for baritone, Tadeusz Baird's *Four Love Sonnets*, settings of Shakespeare, are a special revelation (Baird was no stranger to English literature, his father being Scottish). Orliński's ethereal vocalism is ideally suited to music in which Polish modernism meets Elizabethan lute song.

Another unusual highlight is *Jesień* (Autumn) by Paweł Łukaszewski, in which the piano does a lot of the autumnal evocation; it's a setting by Poland's great interwar lyrical poet Maria Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska, who spent the final years of her life in Manchester. Indeed, the whole album is a treasure trove of poetry, with several great writers included in the Mieczysław Karłowicz group. In more familiar territory are four of Szymanowski's folk-influenced *Kurpian Songs*, and the sequence ends with Stanisław Moniuszko's exhilarating *Prząśniczka* (The Spinner), now something of a party-piece for these artists.

> Tadeusz Baird's *Four Love Sonnets* are a special revelation

**PERFOMANCE** ★★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

Rare beauty: Orliński's voice adds an unusual introspection

You can access thousands of reviews from our extensive archive on the BBC Music Magazine website at **www.classical-music.com**

## JS Bach

**Mass in B minor**
Robin Johannsen (soprano), Marie-Claude Chappuis (mezzo-soprano), Helena Rasker (alto), Sebastian Kohlhepp (tenor), Christian Immler (bass-baritone); RIAS Kammerchor; Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin/ René Jacobs
*Harmonia Mundi HMM 902676.77 96:14 mins (2 discs)*

For his recording of Bach's opus ultimum, René Jacobs explains his conception of the work as a vocal concerto grosso, in which alternating juxtapositions of full choral sonority, or ripieno, occur with smaller groups of soloists, or concertino. The idea is a development of one by Wilhelm Ehmann, a noted scholar and performer of Bach's vocal music during the 1950s and 1960s.

Readers familiar with Jacobs's performances will not be disappointed by the graceful phrasing and light rhythmic pulse which characterise his approach to Bach's music. His soloists are thoughtfully chosen and make considerable appeal. Robin Johannsen has an established reputation as an interpreter of Baroque repertoire, and her Dominus Deus with Sebastian Kohlhepp is brisk, airily articulated and evenly balanced. The vocal timbre of Marie-Claude Chappuis brings warmth and clarity to the Laudamus te, but the Qui tollis peccata mundi, entrusted to four soloists lacks gravitas. Helena Rasker gives an evenly controlled account of Qui sedes and Agnus Dei and Christian Immler is effective in the Quoniam. The Crucifixus, allotted to a quartet of soloists, is poignant.

At its best, the RIAS Kammerchor is vibrant, but sections of the Et in terra pax, the Credo and Confiteor sound tonally insecure. The Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin is supportive with fine contributions from leader Bernhard Forck and oboists Xenia Löffler and Michael Bosch. The recording is dedicated to Bernard Coutaz, founder of Harmonia Mundi in 1958, and his wife Eva who was the label's artistic director for almost 40 years. We too, owe them a debt of gratitude.

*Nicholas Anderson*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★

## Beethoven

**Gegenliebe – Songs**
Daniel Behle (tenor), Jan Schultsz (piano)
*Pan Classics PC10433 75:48 mins*

There's a certain irony in titling an all-Beethoven song disc *Gegenliebe*, or 'Requited Love'. Beethoven, after all, was no stranger to love's unrequited manifestation.

The triumph of hope over experience has nonetheless long bewitched the composers of Lieder, and Daniel Behle's survey encounters the composer at both ends of a song output that so often remains undervalued aside from *Adelaide* or the genre's first cyclic masterpiece: *An die ferne Geliebte*. They're both included, as are Beethoven's first excursion into setting English (the canzonetta's second verse luring Behle uncharacteristically into a slightly self-conscious Gothicism); a sprinkling of Goethe songs – 'Maigesang' brimming with springtime wonder, not to mention a spryly dashing account of 'Es war einmal ein König'; and the disc's title song, dating from the mid 1790s but destined to find its way into the Op. 80 Choral Fantasy.

Possessed of an innate lyricism Behle is an ideal exponent, never tempted to over-egg the simplicity of early songs, while the opera singer within is ever-alert to Beethoven's wider-ranging concerns – the gnarly heroism of *Der Wachtelschlag* to the more sacredly subdued restraint of the two Op. 48 Gellert settings. *Adelaide*, meanwhile, sounds a paean to eternal longing, the name caressed at the end of each stanza, the ardour beautifully modulated. Jan Schultsz's Viennese piano, dating from the last years of Beethoven's life, won't always persuade fans of the modern concert grand, but it yields some fruitily fulsome tremolandos in the Caspari-setting *In questa tomba oscura*. Behle's diction is impeccable, yet the lack of text translations is still a lamentable oversight. *Paul Riley*

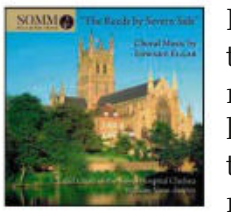
**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★

## Elgar
### – *The Reeds by Severn Side*

**Motets, Op. 2; Give unto the Lord; Queen Alexandra Memorial Ode etc**

Chapel Choir of the Royal Hospital Chelsea/William Vann; Joshua Ryan (organ)

***SOMM Recordings SOMMCD 278 79:47 mins***



If the first track on this release sounds like Mozart, that's because it mainly is. It's a Gloria adapted by the 15-year-old Elgar from a Mozart violin sonata, breezily dispatched on this new recording by the Chapel Choir of the Royal Hospital Chelsea.

There are other juvenilia here too, including a Credo where Elgar stitches together snippets from Beethoven's Fifth, Seventh and Ninth symphonies for four-part choir and organ. Interesting to completists, perhaps, but not essential listening.

The sweetly lyrical *O Salutaris Hostia* and the Op. 2 Motets show the self-taught Elgar beginning to break the shackles of the masters, and elicit warm, attentively inflected performances from William Vann and his 20 singers.

Among the mature pieces, 'As Torrents in Summer' impresses in the scrupulous balancing of voice-parts, and the subtle dynamic shadings Vann uses to create interest. Similarly the eight-part 'There is Sweet Music', with particularly memorable contributions from the sopranos and tenors.

'Give unto the Lord', a setting of Psalm 29, is Elgar in more muscular mode, and the choir clearly relishes its ebullient surges of temperament. Again, though, articulation is pleasingly consistent, with no clipping of note values in more animated sections. Joshua Ryan's marshalling of the important organ part adds further heft to a pleasingly cohesive performance.

The recorded sound is excellent, as are Andrew Neill's booklet notes on the music. All told, this is another feather in the cap for the increasingly impressive Vann-Royal Hospital Chelsea partnership. *Terry Blain*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

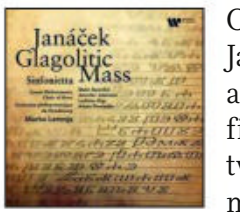
Light and shade: Gerald Finley and Julius Drake perform exemplary Schubert

## Janáček

**Glagolitic Mass; Sinfonietta**

Malin Byström (soprano), Jennifer Johnston (mezzo-soprano), Ladislav Elgr (tenor), Adam Plachetka (baritone), Johann Vexo (organ); Czech Philharmonic Choir of Brno; Strasbourg Philharmonic Orchestra/ Marko Letonja

***Warner Classics 9029628063 64:15 mins***



Opera dominated Janáček's astonishing final decade, but two large-scale masterpieces, one orchestral, the other choral, hold secure places in the repertoire. The Sinfonietta comprises four movements celebrating the beauties of the Moravian capital Brno bookended by exuberant fanfares originally intended for a gymnastic display. Marko Letonja adopts a brisk tempo for the opening, and the brass playing is supremely confident if a little lacking in character. The subsequent movements, however, are well paced and more arresting dramatically. If not the last interpretative word, this beautifully played reading has much to commend it.

The *Glagolitic Mass* shares the Sinfonietta's infectious physicality. In pursuit of a different approach to the familiar Mass, Janáček used Old Church Slavonic for his text; as important is his pantheistic vision of a work redolent of the open-air where the candles are stars shining on the tops of fir trees. It can be one of the most intoxicating choral experiences of the 20th century, but unfortunately this performance of the first version of 1927 is rather mixed. Soloists and chorus are superb, but the orchestral playing is often a touch tentative. Overall this is a missed opportunity to showcase the craggy splendours of Janáček's original conception. *Jan Smaczny*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★

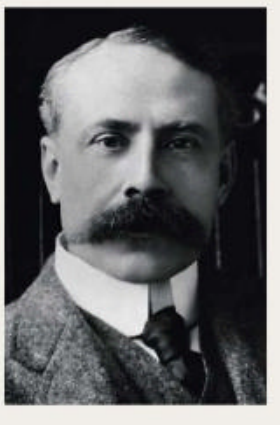
## Schubert

**Die schöne Müllerin**

Gerald Finley (baritone), Julius Drake (piano)

***Hyperion CDA68377 63:01 mins***

The best performances of *Die schöne Müllerin* demand three things: a singer with an instinct for drama, a pianist who hears the world that Schubert makes for his young Miller through his fingers and, above all, a partnership



JINYANG CHEN, GETTY

BACKGROUND TO...

### Elgar's *Scenes from The Saga of King Olaf*

Before the likes of the *Enigma Variations* and the *Pomp and Circumstance* marches made him a musical figure of national renown, Elgar was perhaps best known for choral works like *The Black Knight* and this 1896 cantata. Based on Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *The Saga of King Olaf*, the piece was commissioned by the North Staffordshire Music Festival and premiered at the Victoria Hall, Hanley. With its Wagnerian leitmotivs, *King Olaf* went down rather well and became a favourite of choral societies around the country.

in which singer and pianist are as one. Gerald Finley has the measure of his hero from 'Halt', the third song in the cycle. His bright heroic tone, the febrile sense of excitement as he follows the brook to the mill hints at the mind that is already loose on its hinges. And how well he characterises the miller's careless daughter. By the time that Finley reaches 'Trockne Blumen' we, as much as the young man, are lost. What comfort is there in the return of Spring in the final stanza?

Julius Drake never falters as the piano sings its dirge for the apprentice miller. Those almost imperceptible slides between major and minor that run through the whole cycle are exemplary. And there's no dawdling with the intention of raising the emotional temperature. Significantly, we are never allowed to forget that the piano part is the brook, that other principal character in this tragedy.

Drake and Finley are hand in voice throughout the cycle, yet always understanding that either partner may sing their own song. The four-note lute melody in the piano part in 'Pause' hinting at the idea of a serenade becomes ever more unsettling, and when Finley lightens his tone, hoping for the best, the pianist knows better. A magnificent recording. *Christopher Cook*

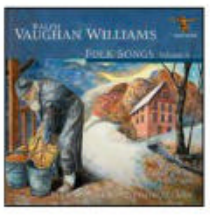
**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

## Vaughan Williams

**Folk Songs, Vol. 4: Folk Songs from Newfoundland etc**

Mary Bevan (soprano), Nicky Spence (tenor), Roderick Williams (baritone), William Vann (piano)

*Albion ALBCD045 60:39 mins*

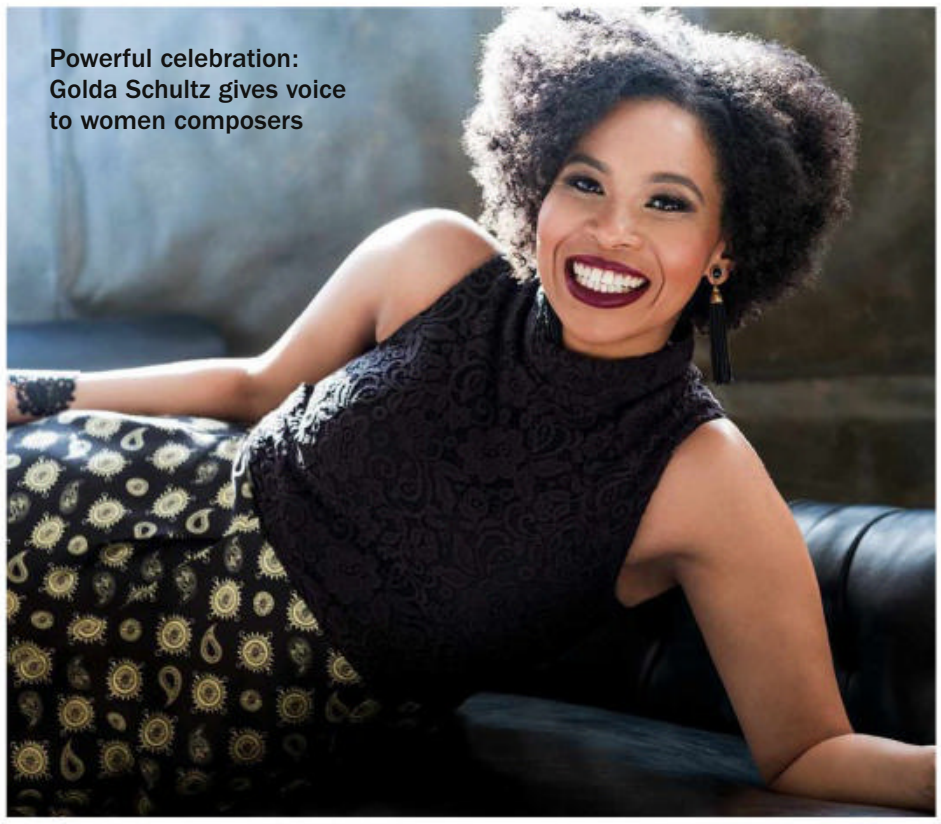



This volume completes Albion Records's survey of Vaughan Williams's respectful and often touchingly lyrical arrangements, all performed with character and artistry by these singers and above all the superbly sensitive pianism of their accompanist William Vann.

Some melodies are more familiar than others. 'She's like the swallow' also appears in Britten's final set of folksongs. Vaughan Williams's arrangement, typical of his style, is more obviously beautiful, but rather lacks the intriguing qualities of Britten's which – unlike the Vaughan Williams – was written to be performed as part of a complete set, and so provides more character in the melody's accompaniment.

If this is an album best sampled in small doses rather than heard in one go, that's no reflection at all on the singers involved: I particularly admire how tenor Nicky Spence holds attention through the eight minutes of 'Lord Akeman'. My only other niggle is how similar baritone Roderick Williams's voice is to Spence's – their duo 'Servant man and husbandman' could do with a bit more vocal contrast, though, given the vivid personalities of these singers, this would be less of an issue if seen in a concert rather than heard on disc. In all, though, a pleasant listen which Vaughan Williams fans should have no hesitation in snapping up. *Daniel Jaffé*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★



Powerful celebration: Golda Schultz gives voice to women composers

DARIO ACOSTA

## This Be Her Verse

**Songs by N Boulanger, R Clarke, E Mayer, C Schumann and Kathleen Tagg**

Golda Schultz (soprano), Jonathan Ware (piano)

*Alpha Classics ALPHA 799 58:46 mins*

The classical music industry still all-too-often pays only lip service to the idea of centring women's creative voices, but *This Be Her Verse* is the real deal. Here's a thoughtful celebration of songs by women, performed with flair and imagination by stellar South African soprano Golda Schultz and outstanding pianist Jonathan Ware.

In the opening four songs by Clara Schumann, Schultz brings a marvellous sense of warmth and wonder. An alternative version of *Erlkönig* by little-known 19th-century composer Emilie Mayer thrums with every bit as much heart-thumping drama as Schubert's famous setting, and finds Ware on especially fine form during the twinkling passages accompanying the 'voice' of the Erlking himself. A handful of powerful songs by Rebecca Clarke includes a truly ferocious setting of 'The Tiger', while Schultz seems especially at home with Nadia Boulanger's luminous works.

Composer Kathleen Tagg and poet Lila Parmer's vibrant *This Be Her Verse* provides a welcome contemporary account of female experience. Commissioned by the performers themselves, the cycle riffs on Philip Larkin's famous poem and fizzes with black humour and percussive energy, and Schultz's voice by turns soars and stings.

A pity there's no real musicological detail in the album's booklet. For such a skilfully compiled set of repertoire, it is a shame not to have more information about individual works. However, in every other respect *This Be Her Verse* is an outstanding album: expertly programmed and performed with terrific verve. *Kate Wakeling*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

## Trennung
### *– Songs of Separation*

**Works by FG Fleischer, Haydn, Herbing, Mozart and Wolff**

Carolyn Sampson (soprano), Kristian Bezuidenhout (piano)

*BIS BIS-2623 (CD/SACD) 75:50 mins*

This recital reveals the musical kinships between Mozart, Haydn and contemporaries such as the Marburg organist August Herbing, Braunschweig-based Friedrich Fleischer, and Christian Wolff from Stettin. And in these outwardly genteel songs what depths of human emotion are plumbed! The thrilling storm music of Herbing's opening mini-drama is virtuosically handled by Kristian Bezuidenhout, and he and Carolyn Sampson enthrallingly unfold the tale of shipwrecked love. Mozart makes a fine contrast. The exquisitely crafted phrases of *Lied der Trennung* are tenderly ornamented and sung with deep pathos by Sampson. The intimate keyboard interlude in 'An den Schlaf' is poised and knowing. 'Abendempfindung', deservedly famous, does not disappoint either.

The extended prelude which opens Wolff's *An das Clavier* showcases the expressive range of the 1805 Viennese Walter piano. This unabashedly sentimental but impressively rich song of suffering is matched by Fleischer's equally well-crafted *Das Clavier*, which displays the 'beguiling melody' described in Richard Wigmore's fine liner notes.

A slightly less interesting selection of Haydn Lieder is enlivened by sympathetic performances. The final dramatic cantata *Arianna a Naxos*, mirroring the opening ballad, is another excellent showcase for Bezuidenhout's inventive playing, and Sampson enjoys the still greater freedom afforded by singing in Italian. Sampson's beguiling, luminous voice, with immaculate German and elegant delivery, is perfectly matched by Bezuidenhout's endlessly inventive imagination. The whole is supported by a resonant acoustic which, despite occasional unevenness, allows every note to speak. Enjoy a long soak in this luxurious bath of classy, 18th-century suffering. *Natasha Loges*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★

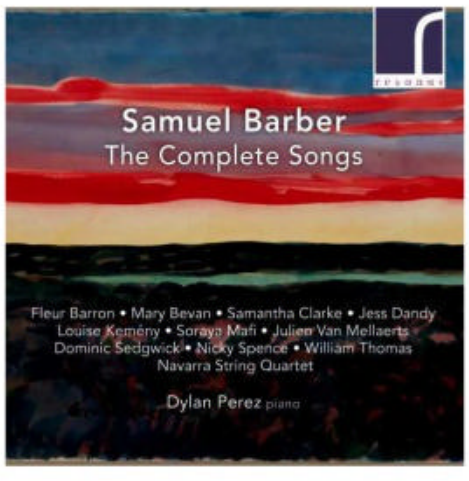
ORCHID CLASSICS

Spanning over 140 years of Latin American musical culture, John-Henry Crawford's new album takes us from Ponce's unique traditional voice and Villa-Lobos' Chopinesque style, to music by still-living Cuban guitarist Leo Brouwer – his innocent lullaby Canción de Cuna.

Other highlights include Astor Piazzolla's timeless Oblivion and Le Grand Tango, and Egberto Gismonti's Água e Vinho.

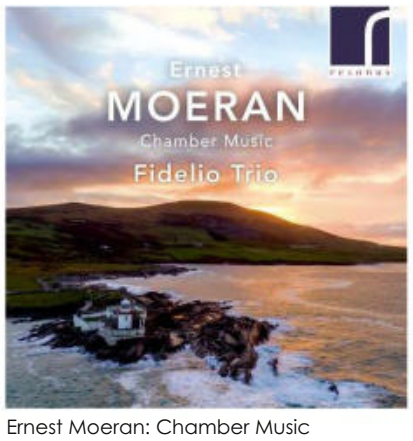
ORC100198

---




'One of the recording's pleasures is the way the songs come to life through 10 different characters, but with Perez as a constant, eloquent presence.'
The Guardian - Album of the Week

Featuring a stellar cast of performers, and curated by pianist Dylan Perez, this complete anthology of Samuel Barber's songs present those works published during his lifetime, together with those published posthumously, some of which are recorded here for the first time.



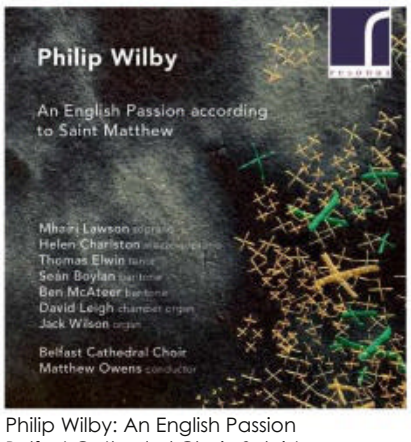

Ernest Moeran: Chamber Music
Fidelio Trio

Johann Ludwig Krebs:
Keyboard Works, Volume 2
Steven Devine (harpsichord)

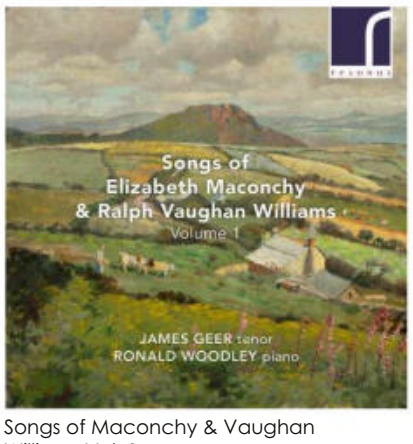
resonus classics
www.resonusclassics.com

INVENTA

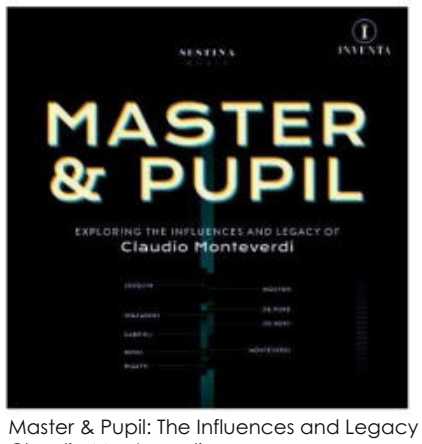
Vespertina Hymnodia: Sacred music by Claudio Dall'Albero
The Choir of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, David Skinner (director)




Philip Wilby: An English Passion
Belfast Cathedral Choir, Soloists, Matthew Owens (conductor)




Songs of Maconchy & Vaughan Williams Vol. 1
James Geer (tenor) & Ronald Woodley (piano)




Master & Pupil: The Influences and Legacy of Claudio Monteverdi
Sestina Music, Mark Chambers (conductor)

Follow us on: @resonusclassics /resonusclassics

CHAMBER CHOICE

# The Gringolts rise to the challenge in Schoenberg

***Misha Donat*** says the composer's complex First and Third quartets have met their musical equals

Masterful musicianship: the Gringolts Quartet put on an impressive show

## Schoenberg

**String Quartet No. 1 in D minor, Op. 7; String Quartet No. 3, Op. 30**
Gringolts Quartet
*BIS BIS-2567 (CD/SACD) 79:31 mins*

When, in 1924, Alban Berg wrote an article called 'Why is Schoenberg's music so hard to understand?' he illustrated it not with one of his teacher's recent 12-note works, but with a piece that had been composed 20 years earlier – the String Quartet No. 1. With its unrelentingly complex contrapuntal textures, and the manner in which it unfolds in a single span of fully three-quarters of an hour, Schoenberg's D minor Quartet offers a formidable challenge to players and listeners alike.

Although it does contain the outlines of a four-movement plan, the music of String Quartet No. 1 is in such a continual state of evolution that by the time we reach the quasi-finale we seem to be hearing yet another development section, rather than a movement with its own distinct identity. The work is ostensibly in D minor, but once that key has been left early on in the proceedings it's only in the closing pages that the music finds its way home again, with a long and serene coda in a luminous D major.

Schoenberg's String Quartet No. 3 is in four discrete movements conforming more or less to classical models, but at the same time, the music is written in Schoenberg's uncompromisingly strict 12-note style, so it again makes for tough listening.

> It would be difficult to imagine more convincing performances

The Gringolts Quartet play both works with absolute mastery, and it would be difficult to imagine more convincing performances. Lingering particularly in the memory is the middle section of the quasi-slow movement in the Quartet No. 1, with its radiant viola melody beautifully played by Silvia Simionescu. This is a really important release.

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

You can access thousands of reviews from our extensive archive on the BBC Music Magazine website at **www.classical-music.com**

## Beethoven

**Cello Sonatas Nos 1-5**
Alisa Weilerstein (cello), Inon Barnatan (piano)
*Pentatone PTC 5186 884*
*110:32 mins (2 discs)*

Inon Barnatan neatly sums up the pleasure of these works by pointing out that they reflect the whole span of Beethoven's musical life, redefining the relationship between piano and cello as they go along. Quite so: the initial challenge of this artform – which Beethoven invented – lay in the fact that the powerful singing voice in the cello's middle register tended to overwhelm the soft tone and limited sustaining power of the late-18th-century piano. It's ironic that piano technology has now tipped the balance the other way.

Alisa Weilerstein's sound has a generous warmth, and Barnatan's has a delicate malleability, so these players complement each other nicely. They announce themselves with measured gravity in the first movement of the F major work, and give plenty of bite, plus a beefy sound, to the *Allegro*. Their noble account of the *Adagio* of the G minor Sonata adumbrates the great slow movements of Beethoven's maturity.

With its rapidly alternating Scherzos and Trios, the A major Sonata presents a particular test which these performers don't fully pass. The *Scherzo*'s theme is aggressively syncopated, and the pianist is expected to change fingers on the tied notes: as Misha Donat has pointed out, this reflects the composer's desire for the vibrato which could have been obtained on the clavichord. When this technique works well – as in the recording by Heinrich Schiff and Till Fellner (on the now defunct Philips label) – the result is a thrilling tension which is not found on this new recording. The miking here is also a bit too close for *fortissimo* sections, but otherwise the rest of this double album is successful, with the seemingly anarchic final sonata emerging in all its rugged intricacy.
*Michael Church*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★

## Brahms

**Piano Quintet; String Quintet No. 2**

Pavel Haas Quartet; Boris Giltburg (piano)

*Supraphon SU4306-2 71:44 mins*

Brahms tried out several formats for a powerful four-movement work in F minor that he composed in 1862. First it was a string quintet, then a sonata for two pianos; but eventually he took the best of both worlds and turned it into a piano quintet. Now perhaps the heart of the repertoire for this combination, it has been recorded a great many times, with each ensemble finding a different way to deal with its sometimes awkward demands in terms of balance, speed and texture.

The Pavel Haas Quartet and Boris Giltburg take on the piece with no holds barred: this is an all-giving, full-on version in which the sense of involvement is total and the exhilaration scarcely stops, but for the beautifully tranquil second movement. A slight downside is that sometimes it seems to go a bit too far, resulting in a certain heaviness, especially in the first movement, and in the outer movements aggressive string sounds become rather dominant for much of the time. This can work when playing in a big hall, but through headphones it can be overwhelming.

The String Quintet – a later, gentler and more genial piece – suffers less from that effect, while sharing the undoubtedly thrilling qualities of innate ensemble playing, strong instinct for tempo and the sense of sheer love for the music. Sound quality is strong and bright, though perhaps contributes to the in-your-face aspect of the recording. *Jessica Duchen*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★

## Lupo

**Fantasias**

Fretwork

*Signum Classics SIGCD716 64:06 mins*

Thomas Lupo was the most famous member of a dynasty of Venetian musicians who settled in England; he served as a violinist and viol player for Queen Elizabeth I and the Jacobean Princes Henry and Charles, for whom he wrote many of his viol consorts. The 19 free-flowing Fantasias and brooding Pavan on this disc reveal a composer of subtle refinement. Lupo's Italian roots emerge in the five- and six-part works, with their distinctly madrigalian style and the pervasive influence of Luca Marenzio, whose madrigals were well-known in England. The lighter three-part works are delightfully varied and experimental, Lupo exploiting different combinations of viols to colouristic effect.

Fretwork highlights Lupo's various affects: here, the style is light and breezy – buoyed by lithe, dancing rhythms, gracefully articulated; elsewhere, wistful melodies and chromaticisms evoke a darker more introspective mood. Throughout, the consort's sound is luminous and so finely balanced that even in the more intricate contrapuntal works individual lines remain lucid. *Kate Bolton-Porciatti*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

## Rachmaninov • Rose • Smetana

**Rachmaninov:** Trio élégiaque No. 1; **L Rose:** Piano Trio; **Smetana:** Piano Trio

Aquinas Piano Trio

*Stone Records 5060192781175 76:05 mins*

'A Rose between two thorns' doesn't quite work here – most of the thorns as well as an unearthly fragrance at times belong to the big central work, Leonard Rose's 2019 Piano Trio. A master of unconventional form, taking only the broadest of cues here from the seven-movement continuity of Beethoven's Op. 131 String Quartet, Rose sacrificed composing for the law but has since made up for lost time. Like Smetana and Rachmaninov – and indeed like most composers when they took up the piano trio form – he has much to lament, in this case USA shootings and war crimes in Syria which lie behind the cumulative elegy of the final movement. Despite that, and constant reference to a Passacaglia theme, the essence is mercurial, sometimes even playful, and the light which shines through allows the work to end in peace. It's certainly a richly wrought and fascinating addition to the piano trio repertoire.

While Rachmaninov's youthful homage to Tchaikovsky – still alive at the time – follows the lessons of the master with its own impressive themes, Smetana's early work teems with originality, both in tragic pathos (he was mourning the loss of his four-year old daughter) and in structural ingenuity. Violinist Ruth Rogers and cellist Katherine Jenkinson are captured with respective brilliance and resonance by the recording, so it's a shame that aurally Martin Cousin has to take a back seat; Smetana's and Rachmaninov's piano writing is too big and strong for that. *David Nice*

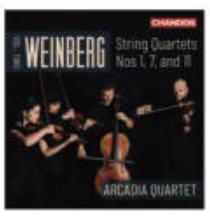
**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★

## Weinberg

**String Quartets Nos 1, 7 & 11**

Arcadia Quartet

*Chandos CHAN 20174 69:44 mins*




The second volume in the Arcadia Quartet's Weinberg cycle is every bit as impressive as its predecessor. The performers, supported by a warm but clear recording, really get to the heart of the music, exploiting a wide spectrum of emotions in each of these works, and taking infinite care in maximising textural variety and instrumental balance. Such qualities are most crucial to projecting the elusive character of the First Quartet, composed in Warsaw in 1939, but revised near the end of the composer's life. The First is unquestionably a remarkable achievement. However, its oversaturated chromatic writing and densely scored passage work, especially in the opening movement, pose considerable challenges for the performers. The Arcadias overcome these potential problems superbly, bringing both clarity and a real sense of direction to the music.

Their performances of the two other quartets are equally illuminating. The highlight of the Seventh Quartet is the large-scale Finale whose central section is an extended set of variations on a deeply unsettling theme that rises to an impassioned climax. The Arcadias negotiate the ebb and flow of the musical argument with compelling power, unleashing an almost unhinged sense of emotional collapse when Weinberg's writing is at its most ferocious.

In sharp contrast, the Eleventh Quartet of 1966 is far more restrained. Yet the Arcadias respond imaginatively to the somewhat disconcerting subtexts in the music, not least in the shadowy chorales and eruptive pizzicato passages of the second movement, and the bizarre allusions to clucking chickens in the first. *Erik Levi*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

## Alter Ego

**Works by Bergmüller, Dowland, Kapsberger, Purcell et al**

David Orlowsky (clarinet), David Bergmüller (lute)

*Warner Classics 9029630790 43:22 mins*

*Alter Ego* heralds a new collaboration between clarinettist David Orlowsky and lutenist David Bergmüller. The seductive clarinet/lute combination recalls chalumeau

### BACKGROUND TO... Smetana's *Piano Trio in G minor*

For all its passionate Romanticism, Smetana's 1855 Piano Trio was composed in the shadow of tremendous sadness and grief. It was dedicated to his eldest daughter (Bedřiška) who had died at the age of four after contracting scarlet fever, when the composer was in his early thirties. There's a keen sense of darkness and sorrow pervading the work, which otherwise features rich themes and the influence of eastern European folk music. It's one of just a handful of chamber works by him, including the string quartets of 1876 and '83.

GETTY

Crossover appeal: David Orlowsky plays a varied set

and lute timbres championed by early-18th-century opera composers like Francesco Conti. Arrangements of 16th- and-17th-century music by Purcell, Dowland, Preston and Kapsberger are juxtaposed with new works by Orlowsky and Bergmüller.

Four Purcell tracks effectively capture sentiments expressed in their sung texts: the clarinet's vocalise personifying Queen Dido's sorrow, and (in *Mighty Powers*) the torment felt by the Inca princess Orazia. In *Music for a While* delicate soft dynamics draw us in, although the turbulent rhapsodic element pushes stylistic parameters a mite too far. Imaginative and evocative detached timbres capture the frosty atmosphere of *Cold Song*, a feature we also hear in the duo's own *Zeitfaltung*. Among the other original pieces, *Eileen* has already enjoyed acclaim as the soundtrack to the short film celebrating centenarian dancer/choreographer Eileen Kramer. *Napoli Sketch 2* showcases Orlowsky's flexible Klezmer-influenced sound and the closing *Toccata* blends the two instruments in a gratifying symbiosis. *Ingrid Pearson*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

## Bassoon Steppes

**Rachmaninov:** Cello Sonata (arr. bassoon); **plus works by Auerbach, Glinka, Scriabin, Shostakovich and Tchaikovsky**
Lola Descours (bassoon), Paloma Kouider (piano)
*Orchid Classics ORC100190 62:51 mins*

KAUPO KIKKAS

Bassoonists are no stranger to transcriptions, and all but one of the works on this rewarding release from the Tchaikovsky competition winner Lola Descours and pianist Paloma Kouider were originally intended for another instrument or for voice. The exception is *I Walk Unseen* by the US-based Russian composer Lera Auerbach, a wistfully rhapsodic seven-minute piece that feels like a song without words even when the bassoon is tracing paths no singer would or could follow: veering off pitch at the ends of phrases, cartwheeling up and down the instrument's range, whispering in trills and flutter-tongued notes.

It fits beautifully into this all-Russian programme, which begins with Scriabin's yearning Etude in B flat minor and ends with Descours and Koiuder's arrangement of Rachmaninov's Cello Sonata, Kouider clear and agile in the detail and Descours playing with lush-toned fullness. Perhaps the fiery first movement misses the bite of bow on string, and the song melody of Glinka's *Do Not Tempt Me* sounds almost too nonchalant without chewy Russian consonants to season it, but the orientalism of Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Nightingale Enslaved by the Rose* sounds entirely idiomatic here. Best of all is their selection of six of Shostakovich's piano preludes: these could have been written for bassoon, so perfectly does the instrument lend itself to the quickfire vamping and staccato melodies, and so succinctly does Descours and Kouider's playing capture the music's mixture of pomposity and sincerity, or, in the funereal Prelude No. 14, its ferocity. *Erica Jeal*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★

## Le monde selon George Antheil

**Antheil:** Violin Sonata No. 1; **Beethoven:** Violin Sonata No. 7; plus pieces by **Cage** and **Feldman**
Patricia Kopatchinskaja (violin), Joonas Ahonen (piano)
*Alpha Classics ALPHA 797 64:46 mins*

Inventor, 'futurist', writer, pianist, American composer George Antheil dubbed himself the 'bad boy of music', and certainly the Violin Sonata he composed in 1923 shortly after arriving in Europe pulls no punches. It might lack the eye-popping line-up of the *Ballet mécanique* with its 16 player-pianos, siren, percussion and three aircraft propellers, but in a reading as viscerally bold as Patricia Kopatchinskaja's, it thrills and intrigues. Across the outer movements both performers pursue Antheil's truculently provocative mechanistic browbeating with conspiratorial relish and unstoppable élan. Kopatchinskaja unleashed is a thing to behold; and Joonas Ahonen is every bit as engaged and resolute as the fizzing ferment of *Petrushka* or the savagery of *The Rite of Spring* are left blinking in disbelief.

Fuelled by a trip to Tunis, the two inner movements are imbued with 'all the strangeness of Africa' according to Antheil, and Kopatchinskaja is in thrall to their mercurial fantasy. She's also ravishingly lambent in the dreamy moonbathing of Cage's *Nocturne* whose sensual torpor is disturbed by some strategic spikiness. And the Feldman is navigated with sure-footed expressivity and dramatic precision. Less successful, though, is Beethoven's Sonata Op. 30 No. 2. In live performance the sheer febrile intensity would doubtless convince; but for repeated listening, her urge to startle, the self-regarding quirkiness and sometimes gruffly 'pinched' violin sonorities prove distracting – even as they determinedly position Beethoven as a 'bad boy of music' in his own right! *Paul Riley*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

## Shining Night

**Works by JS Bach, Ellington, Lauridsen, Piazzolla et al**
Anne Akiko Meyers (violin), Jason Vieaux (guitar), Fabio Biondi (piano)
*Avie AV2455 64:32 mins*

Armed with the wide colour palette of her 1741 ex-Vieuxtemps Guarneri violin, Anne Akiko Meyers and her recording engineers go all out for bold projection on this glossy and maddening album. The violin's tones come further decorated with ample use of vibrato and enough portamento-slithering to suggest this distinguished instrument is not only polished but greased. Guitarist Jason Vieaux – her principal accompanist – must have been given acoustical help to avoid being swamped in the sound balance. The trick worked, anyway; a quiet mouse has become Meyers's equal partner.

Pandemic-slanted, the album hops across centuries, seeking balm and the value of cherishing nature, love and poetry, even in wild flings like Andy Poxon's mischievous arrangement of Corelli's *La Folia*, certainly one of the more enjoyable tracks. Piazzolla's *L'Histoire du tango*, another piece needing sprightly fingering, also gets an exhilarating workout. Once Meyers reduces the decibels, soulful beauties can sing and soar, as in the aria from Villa-Lobos's *Bachianas Brasileiras* No. 5. Leo Brouwer's newly commissioned *Lauda al Arbol Gigante*, in homage to the Giant Sequoia tree, is also good value.

Meyers's artistry, however, has its glutinous side. Calorie-conscious listeners should especially watch out for Morten Lauridsen's violin and piano distillations of his already emollient choral pieces. In an unappealingly slow rendition, Meyers and Vieaux also sorely test the spell of Duke Ellington's moody *In My Solitude*. Throughout there are fireworks and much technical skill; but subtlety lovers all in all should probably consider getting their balm elsewhere. *Geoff Brown*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★

INSTRUMENTAL CHOICE

# This Beethoven return is worth the wait

Mitsuko Uchida's *Diabelli Variations* is a total triumph, says ***Rebecca Franks***

## Beethoven

**Diabelli Variations**
Mitsuko Uchida (piano)
*Decca 485 2731 53:38 mins*

When Mitsuko Uchida recorded the mighty *Hammerklavier* Sonata, her album won Recording of the Year at the 2008 BBC Music Magazine Awards. Yet it has taken since then for the Japanese pianist to return to Beethoven on disc. Has the wait been worth it? The answer is a resounding yes. Her *Diabelli Variations* are a triumph of wit and character, revelling in the humour that the composer took in turning the unassuming 'cobbler's patch' theme into an expansive solo piano work that, when played at its best, seems to encompass all human life.

Over 33 variations, Beethoven juxtaposes contrasting moods and musical styles with endless invention and kaleidoscopic vision. Uchida manages to bring out the individuality of each variation without losing sight of its context in the whole, balancing the composer's voice with her own inimitable style. Each variation deserves comment, but a smattering of my highlights will have to do – though any listener will undoubtedly have their own. There are moments to delight in the quality of the playing itself: the deliciously controlled pitter-patter of quavers in variation two, or the nimble fingerwork of variation 25. At others, it is all about drama, rhetoric and storytelling: the punchy silences of variation 13, say, or the pensive recollections of variation 18.

> Uchida balances the composer's voice with her inimitable style

Yet it's in her handling of the profundity lying beneath that Uchida makes her *Diabellis* stand out. Underneath the constantly changing surface runs a seam of solemnity and devotion, whether mystical, enigmatic, lyrical, or consolatory. It is this that lingers in the memory, long after Uchida has (metaphorically) danced the *Diabelli*'s final minuet.

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

Power and profundity: Uchida's performance lingers in the memory

You can access thousands of reviews from our extensive archive on the BBC Music Magazine website at **www.classical-music.com**

## Albéniz

**Iberia, Books 1-4**
Nelson Goerner (piano)
*Alpha Classics ALPHA 829 82:41 mins*

Never judge a work by its title – musically, *Iberia* owes more to France than its Spanish namesake, although glimpses of composer Isaac Albéniz's beloved homeland are ever on the horizon. The collection comprises 12 pieces, split equally into four books, created between 1905 and 1908. Both the structure and harmonic language has much in common with Debussy's *Images* (1901-07) but Albéniz's style is entirely his own, featuring the folkloric flavour imbued into his earlier works combined with a Lisztian virtuosity that he, quite reasonably, worried made it unplayable.

Not for pianists like Nelson Goerner. Having produced several excellent Chopin recordings, the Argentinian now demonstrates that he can handle Albéniz's magnum opus. There is a whisper of a flamenco in the opening 'Evocación'; a hint of a feast day in 'El Puerto'. At first, 'Rondeña' feels like it might be a typical traditional dance, but after a few minutes the opening theme is virtually unidentifiable. Similarly, 'El Albaicín' – named after a gypsy quarter of Granada – establishes an apparently simplistic melody that quickly morphs into a complex Debussyian reverie. Goerner successfully points out the various landmarks – such as the Spanish *jota* motif that is woven across all four books – without distracting from the overall free-form shape of the music.

Goerner's *Iberia* has much to recommend it, particularly the energy that comes from a concert recording. But Marc-André Hamelin's 2005 studio version (Hyperion) remains the preferred choice, both for its supreme pianism and impeccable sound quality.

*Claire Jackson*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★

GEOFFROY SCHIELD

## Hahn

**Le rossignol éperdu; Premières valses**
Pavel Kolesnikov (piano)
*Hyperion CDA68383 66:35 mins*

We are told that Pavel Kolesnikov is 'celebrated for his imaginative and thought-provoking programming', and nobody can argue with that. The trouble starts when imagination also impinges too forcefully on the musical text.

On the credit side, Kolesnikov's idea of having the Yamaha CDX tuned 'to maximise the extreme sensitivity of the keys, with closely positioned microphones' works

extremely well, and his control at *piano* and below is faultless. Although nothing is said about 2022 marking the 75th anniversary of Hahn's death, fans of the composer cannot but be happy to listen to a less familiar side of his talent. The 25 pieces here are all short, only two lasting above five minutes and, though there are brief moments of barnstorming, the tone is mostly in Hahn's familiar lyrical mode, even if here seasoned every now and then with unsettled chromaticism.

On the debit side, the pianist often deals 'imaginatively' with the text, so that pauses are inserted, marked dynamics and pedalling ignored and, most damagingly, in the final piece 'Ouranos' the marking 'excessivement lent' observed, but not the explanatory printed tempo marking of quaver=48; instead we have quaver=25, which makes nonsense of the music. And there was surely room on the disc for the tiny 'Invitation à la valse' which opens the collection of *Premières Valses*. *Roger Nichols*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

## Mozart

**Piano works, Vol. 1 – Sonata No. 13 in B flat; Fantasias, K396, K397 & K475; Adagio in C, K356; Menuett in D, K355; Rondo in D, K485**

Federico Colli (piano)

*Chandos CHAN 20233 69:07 mins*

Federico Colli prefaces this performance with a love letter to Mozart, whose music helps him 'bring out the sincerest and frankest side' of his personality. Yet he rebels against standard conservatoire interpretations: 'I converse with my heart every day, trying to investigate how I can play your music. At first I forget about the score.' He fills his 'mind and heart with the most truthful images and stories' which the music arouses in him.

It's not a question of 'liberties' taken: it's about a kind of musical free-association, a grabbing of clues in the score which most pianists follow to the letter, but which Colli takes in both hands and runs with. The first chord of the first piece here is followed by a preposterous 14-second pause, yet it is not long before I realise I am actually more than ready to buy into Colli's Mozart. His C minor K475 Fantasie is a journey through a craggy landscape full of beauty and mystery; the K396 Fantasie is wilfully discursive, but has powerful eloquence. The D minor Fantasie passes in a whisper, with little disturbances as in a dreamy sleep. The D major Rondo is a trick-free, cheerful celebration of unsullied beauty, while the little Menuett is presented unassumingly with just a hint of skewed discord. The closing sonata is a delight: the *Allegro* nimbly but delicately delivered, the *Andante* pure tenderness, and the disintegrating finale bursts with exuberant energy. *Michael Church*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

For the love of Mozart: Federico Colli goes his own way and impresses

## Richard Pantcheff

**Organ works: Passacaglia on a theme of Benjamin Britten etc**

Simon Passmore (organ)

*Prima Facie PFCD174/175*

*92:11 mins (2 discs)*

Richard Pantcheff (b1959), known mostly for his choral and organ music, was mentored as a composer by Benjamin Britten. That's difficult to hear in this mostly turgid music, but the opening work ought to have been of interest. Commissioned during Britten's centenary in 2013, it is based on a short theme that the composer jotted down in 1958 for the great French organist Jean Langlais to improvise upon at the Festival Hall. *Passacaglia on a Theme of Benjamin Britten* has its moments, but is mostly so murky that even Britten's theme is obscured. There is more clarity in *Voces Organi*, in effect voluntaries tailored to the church's calendar, designed – like weekly flower arrangements – to create atmosphere on a rainy day.

Several pieces here were written in 2012-19 when Pantcheff, usually based in Oxford, was director of music at St George's Anglican Church in Parktown, Johannesburg. *A Sequence for St George* conjures up some interesting sonorities, but mostly sounds like improvisation. The Chorale Prelude on 'Werde munter, mein Gemüte' and a Trio Sonata, also from that time, invoke Bach rather than Britten, no more successfully. The recording, made at St Ann's in Manchester, is solid but the music gives little scope for interpretative flair. *John Allison*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★
**RECORDING** ★★★

## Prokofiev

**Piano Sonatas Nos 1, 3 & 5; Visions fugitives**

Alexander Melnikov (piano)

*Harmonia Mundi HMM902204*

*49:53 mins*

With the three so-called 'war' sonatas 6, 7 and 8 covered in the two previous releases, you might think that the third instalment of Alexander Melnikov's Prokofiev cycle is a mopping-up job. But Melnikov is far too intelligent and imaginative a pianist not to make a special argument for each sonata. No. 3, put together in 1917 'from old notebooks', includes most of the ingredients that would haunt the works of the late 1930s and early '40s, including a brief white-note retreat into dreams. Melnikov propels its essential 12/8 momentum with clarity and character, showing how different it is from the same metre which informs the Rachmaninovian No. 1. There's more nuance, rhythmic flexibility and dynamic contrast than I've ever heard before in this piece of relative juvenilia, reminding us that Melnikov is a peerless interpreter of the older composer.

The pianist has his own take on the wonky neoclassicism of No. 5, heard here in the substantially revised form Prokofiev gave it shortly before his untimely death in 1953, though it still belongs emphatically to the 1920s. He's justified in introducing disquiet right at the start, despite the 'tranquillo' injunction; nothing is ever settled in this unique case among the sonatas. And it was clever to follow with the earlier *Visions fugitives*, which begin by making a similarly ambiguous play around C major. If you want to sample Melnikov's uniquely subtle artistry, try the 31 seconds of No. 6, 'con eleganza', or the trance states of Nos 17 and 18. Extreme sensitivity here justifies Prokofiev's reaching out for the ineffable. *David Nice*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

## Tailleferre

**Piano Works, Vol. 1: Sous le rempart d'Athènes; Fleurs de France Suite; Suite dans le style Louis XV; Au pavillon d'Alsace; Pastorale Amazone; Pastorale Inca; Impromptu; Romance etc**

Nicolas Horvath (piano)

*Grand Piano GP891 83:21 mins*

Germaine Tailleferre (1892-1983) was the only female composer of 'Les Six' and, unlike most of her colleagues, has infrequently graced contemporary concert halls. She was an excellent pianist, playing duos with Satie and Stravinsky, and many of the pieces here have the quirky brevity of the former and the bitonal and polytonal gravitation

of the latter, while also showing some affinity for the language of Lili Boulanger and for Fauré in his Arcadian mode. There's a fondness for pastorales and archaic styles from past centuries, with admirable clarity and condensed thinking throughout.

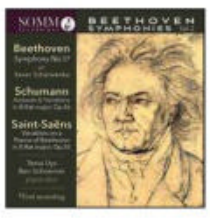
Tailleferre needs advocacy, but in some ways this first volume in a new series by pianist Nicolas Horvath is possibly a victim of its own 'completism'. There is some fascinating, highly individual music in it, but a chunk is devoted to transcriptions of Baroque and Renaissance pieces – some barely 18 seconds long and, though pleasant, serving little purpose. Tailleferre at her best is represented by, for example, an Impromptu and a Romance; there are other moments, however, which can become infuriating, progress seemingly trapped in an ostinato pattern or one harmony (as in *Pastorale Inca*), and a lengthy piece based on some of her incidental music, *Sous le rempart d'Athènes*, relies on obsessive trilling.

Horvath's playing does not always bring the pieces convincingly to life, being very forthright in tone, with voices sometimes not as carefully layered, coloured or phrased as they could have been. The piano's treble seems also to lose some of its tuning. *Jessica Duchen*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★
**RECORDING** ★★★

## Beethoven Symphonies, Vol. 2

**Beethoven:** Symphony No. 5 (arr. Scharwenka) **Saint-Saëns:** Variations on a Theme by Beethoven, Op. 35; **Schumann:** Andante and Variation for two pianos, Op. 46
Tessa Uys, Ben Schoeman (piano)
*SOMM SOMMCD 0650 65:02 mins*




Before modern recordings made the sound of an orchestra a routine part of home listening, there was a huge appetite for piano arrangements of the symphonies of Beethoven and others. Franz-Xaver Scharwenka's fine transcription of the Fifth Symphony dates from early in the 20th century, and was therefore devised for the kind of modern concert grand or home upright piano that's familiar today.

The challenge for those pianists playing an arrangement of this kind is to convey the sonic and rhythmic firepower that must have so astonished the music's first audiences two centuries ago, while avoiding eardrum-bruising overkill in the process. Tessa Uys and Ben Schoeman excellently square this circle, finding some specially beguiling sounds in the *Andante con moto* slow movement. Even in such skilled hands, however, the hushed tension of the *Scherzo* movement's main sections can't really be conjured in piano-duet sonority.

The players then switch to two pianos in the other two works. Saint-Saëns's *Variations on a Theme of Beethoven* (the theme being from the Piano Sonata, Op. 31 No. 3) is in places near-ridiculously overwritten, but a scintillating listening experience nonetheless. And Schumann's *Andante and Variations in B flat*, while offering no evident connection with Beethoven, is a warmly imaginative creation that more than deserves its unlikely place here. In terms both of precise co-ordination and engaging interplay, the performances are state-of-the-art. *Malcolm Hayes*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★

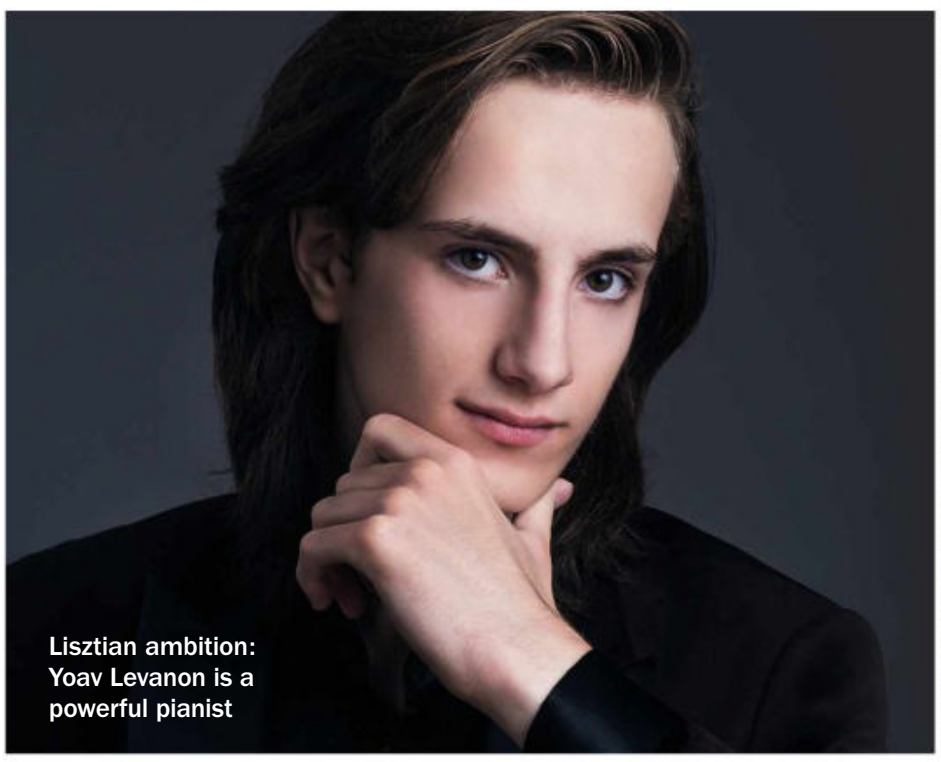
## A Monument for Beethoven

**Liszt:** Piano Sonata in B minor; Grande Étude de Paganini No. 3 'La Campanella'; **Mendelssohn:** Variations sérieuses, Op. 54; **R Schumann:** Fantasie in C; **Chopin:** Prelude No. 25 in C sharp minor
Yoav Levanon (piano)
*Warner Classics 9029642552 81:59 mins*

For his debut recording, Yoav Levanon has created a monument for Beethoven. The title refers to the bronze statue of the German composer erected in Bonn in 1845, originally mooted for the 75th anniversary of his birth. Yet it's the spirit of Liszt that brings this programme to life, opening with the mighty B minor Sonata: the virtuoso, after all, galvanised the monument's fundraising campaign. There's a temptation to wonder how far the album idea was inspired by the Israeli-French pianist's naturally Lisztian looks. It's certainly played up on the front cover, with his swept-back dark hair, pale face, and silk cravat, while the booklet photoshoot goes all out in recreating a scene from the Romantic hero's life.

Levanon is undaunted by Liszt's Sonata, giving a performance of heroic sweep. A powerful player, the 18-year-old is nimble and articulate in the virtuoso passages, dramatic with the rhetorical flourishes, tender and lyrical when required. For the most part, he lands the music's emotional climaxes, though in the final third his grip of its architecture loosens. Liszt dedicated the piece to Schumann, reciprocating the honour bestowed on him in the Fantasie in C, written to help raise funds for the monument. Levanon is an assured and elegant Schumann player, yet there's room to find more spontaneity and fire. His approach pays off best in Mendelssohn's *Variations sérieuses* in D minor, Op. 54, also composed for the fundraiser. Elsewhere, we sample his crystalline Chopin playing in the C sharp minor Prelude No. 25, and both poetry and caprice in Liszt's *La Campanella*. *Rebecca Franks*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★



Lisztian ambition: Yoav Levanon is a powerful pianist

SARAH FERRARA, NIR SLAKMAN

## Solitude

**Biber:** Passacaglia in G minor, C105; **Kreisler:** Recitative and Scherzo Caprice for Solo Violin, Op. 6; **Paganini:** Caprices Nos 10 & 24, Op. 1; **R Panufnik:** Hora Bessarabia; **Fazil Say:** Cleopatra; **Joo Yeon Sir:** My Dear Bessie; **Laura Snowden:** Through the Fog; **Ysaÿe:** Sonata No. 6, Op. 27
Joo Yeon Sir (violin)
*Rubicon RCD1076 56:35 mins*

Joo Yeon Sir's latest album *Solitude* is her third for the innovative British label Rubicon Classics. In the seven years since graduating from London's Royal College of Music, Sir has established a reputation for her stylistic flair and versatility.

The opening track, Biber's Passacaglia, displays a clarity and elegance we might expect from the most seasoned practitioners of historical performance. Sir's interpretations of warhorses of the violin repertoire by violinist/composers Nicolò Paganini, Fritz Kreisler and Eugène Ysaÿe are equally flawless and authoritative. The lithe and compelling virtuosity of Kreisler's Op. 6 *Recitative and Scherzo Caprice* is a particular highlight, and the two Paganini caprices Nos 10 and 24 from Op. 1 are utterly majestic.

Four contemporary works include music by Roxanna Panufnik, Fazil Say and premiere recordings of music by guitarist/composer Laura Snowden and Sir herself. In Snowden's *Through the Fog*, Sir effectively distils the work's veiled mystery, and her own *My Dear Bessie* gives free reign to the violin's innate vocality and timbral flexibility.

Acknowledging the importance of the listener, Sir's thoughtful and sincere sleeve notes frame the collection. This is elegant, refined and authoritative musicianship in action. *Ingrid Pearson*

**PERFORMANCE** ★★★★★
**RECORDING** ★★★★★

# World

*Jon Lusk* finds a range of albums from highland hits to francophone urbanity

WORLD CHOICE

## A vandring minstrel

Norwegian folk artist Benedicte Maurseth evokes the soundscapes of her native land

At one with nature: Benedicte Maurseth weaves a sonic tapestry

ANDERS BERGENSEN

### Benedicte Maurseth

**Hárr**

Benedicte Maurseth (Hardanger fiddle), Rolf-Erik Nystrøm (saxophone)
*Hubro HUBROCD2645*

Norwegian Hardanger fiddler Benedicte Maurseth first featured in this magazine with her 2010 debut *Alde*. Since then, she has collaborated with other neo-folk luminaries such as David Rothenberg, who invited her to join him in several musical projects involving the sounds of unique birds from around the world. Following this experience, her latest album *Hárr* is an exquisite *musique concrete* sound portrait of Maurseth's native Hardangervidda region, making canny use of samples of local wildlife and a small ensemble featuring double bass, vibes, marimba and electronica. It takes off with a typically forlorn sounding golden plover and sleepily twittering passerines before the appearance of irked or startled common cranes and arctic loons out on their own astral plane. Rolf-Erik Nystrøm's atmospheric flurries of sax could almost be wild sounds, but then there are the clanking bells of reindeer and their breathy, ungulate exertions, as well as matter-of-fact exchanges in Norwegian by their herders. You might feel you've been *vandring* in the Hardangervidda National park once the piece ends. ★★★★★

## July round-up

Scottish singer/composer ***Karine Polwart*** also makes a stellar return to this column, having last appeared in July 2019 with her heartfelt masterpiece *Laws Of Motion*.

However, her new release ***Still As Your Sleeping*** is a beautifully accomplished genuine duo album with pianist Dave Milligan, who lives in the same Midlothian village of Pathhead as she does. The songs are an intimately sequenced mix of familiar traditional material such as 'Ae Fond Kiss' and interpretations of Kate McGarrigle and fellow Scot Alasdair Roberts, alongside original songs such as highlight 'Siccar Point', which epitomises Polwart's gift for storytelling and her deep feel for the Scottish landscape – here a seascape. *(Hudson HUD025CD)* ★★★★★

A sharp contrast in both feel and content is the nightclub atmosphere of ***L'Anniversaire***, by French accordionist ***Daniel Colin***, known as 'The Golden Fingers of the Accordion'.

This new recording celebrates his 80th birthday, and his status as the most revered exponent of modern musette. He's big in Japan, and also big on waltzes. There are plenty of suavely urbane vocals in French as well as a musical saw, which creates novel, eerie effects in places, and arrangements also include xylophone, castanets plus a Brazilian *pandeiro*, while Colin himself ventures further south by playing an Argentine bandoneon on a tango. *(Buda 860371)* ★★★★★

Another French language disc with boisterous group vocals that continues the anniversary theme is

***20 Printemps***, by Quebec five-piece ***Le Vent Du Nord***, who still sound like a breath of fresh air after two decades of touring their rollicking dance music around the world. Their infectious sound is driven by fiddle, hurdy gurdy, diatonic accordion, piano, guitar, bouzouki and podorythmie – foot tapping. It's simply irresistible, and as Canadian as maple syrup, which they've even penned a song in praise of. That sits sweetly among the traditional songs and tunes they've sourced from archives and song collecting friends. *(Compagnie du Nord CIE012)* ★★★★★

In far sunnier climes, but still within the Americas, ***Encore*** is the second archival release of Bahamian singer/guitarist ***Joseph Spence***, recorded live in New York City and

in his Nassau cottage, during 1965. His sister Edith Pinder and family members also feature. Once heard, Spence's eccentric growling, near-scat delivery of African American gospel standards such as 'Give me that Old Time Religion' and 'Down By The Riverside', which combined the rhyming tradition of Bahamian sponge fishermen of the early 20th century with an influential and innovative guitar style, will never be forgotten. He even seems to have been a vintage foot-tapper. *(Smithsonian Folkways SFW 40242)* ★★★★

We should consider ourselves lucky that the reigning queen of Afro-Peruvian music ***Susana Baca*** is still making recordings, having gone off the radar since making

several delightful albums for David Byrne's Luaka Bop label, among others, in the early noughties. As Peru's former Minister of Culture, she still has plenty to say about matters she considers urgent, so the lyrics of ***Palabras Urgentes*** concern matters such as global warming and the need to protect our environment, the example of former freedom fighters, the importance of celebrating Afro-Peruvian culture and resisting racism and corruption. And she sings with a voice that carries great moral authority and gentle wisdom. *(Real World Records CDRW237)* ★★★★★

I am music
I live through your moments
Your first shake of the rattle
Your recorder lesson
Your match day anthem
Your queueing anticipation
Your hands in the air
Your main stage mayhem
Your favourite movie scene
Your first dance
Your family singalong
Your standing ovation
Your swan song.

If you care about the future of music,
join us as a supporter for free.

→ theMU.org

Musicians'
Union

# Brief notes

## This month's discoveries include Danish Baroque and vibrant Brazilian dance

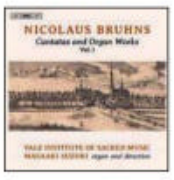
**Mason Bates**
**Philharmonia Fantastique – The Making of the Orchestra**
Chicago Symphony/Edwin Outwater
*Sony Classical G0100047511411*

This short-ish concerto for orchestra introduces the woodwind, string, brass and percussion families with dashes of jazz and techno. It's a noble enterprise, with deeper ideals about human diversity and unity. Bates is, as ever, an engaging musical storyteller. (MB) ★★★

**Brahms • Schumann**
**Ein deutsches Requiem etc**
Jan Michiels (piano) et al
*Evil Penguin EPRC0046*

Brahms's Requiem is one of the more docile of its type, so interweaving its movements with Schumann's *Scenes from Childhood* works rather well as a concept, creating a benign musical narrative between the two ends of life's journey. (JP) ★★★★

**Bruhns**
**Cantatas and Organ Works, Vol. 1**
Yale Institute of Sacred Music/ Masaaki Suzuki *BIS BIS-2271*



With the ever-meticulous Masaaki Suzuki at the helm as both director and organist, this is a superb introduction to the music of a little known Danish Baroque composer, much of it hauntingly beautiful. (JP) ★★★★★

**Valerie Coleman • Jessie Montgomery • F Price**
**Orchestral Works**
New York Youth Symphony
*Avie AV2503*

If the tuning in this debut recording by the New York Youth Symphony takes a while to settle and occasionally wavers, there's little to quibble about elsewhere. They get Price right, with playing full of flair. Montgomery's *Soul Force* offers a powerful conclusion. (RF) ★★★

**Debussy**
**La damoiselle élue; Nocturnes etc**
Radio France Philharmonic et al
*Alpha Classics ALPHA777*

Fragments of Debussy's incidental music for *Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien*, arranged by Caplet, are the moody centrepiece of this orchestral survey under Mikko Franck. It's the thrillingly atmospheric Nocturnes which steal the show, however. (MB) ★★★★

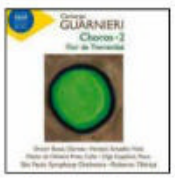
**Cheryl Frances-Hoad**
**Excelsus**
Thomas Carroll (cello)
*Orchid Classics ORC100188*

This seven-movement solo cello suite from 2002 takes its inspiration from the Requiem Mass. Frances-Hoad and Carroll were Menuhin School students together – and their connection shows. This is beautiful, uncompromising and heartfelt music performed by a cellist at the top of his game. (CS) ★★★★★

**Robert Groslot**
**Concerto for Bass Guitar**
Thomas Fiorini (bass guitar); Brussels Philharmonic *Antarctica AR035*

Unable to sparkle or soar above the orchestra, the bass guitar is not the most natural concerto instrument. Yes, some of the solo passages do sound a bit like a band member noodling around before a gig, but it's rarely dull. (JP) ★★★

**Guarnieri**
**Choros, Vol. 2**
São Paulo Symphony Orchestra et al
*Naxos 8.574403*



I have so enjoyed discovering Guarnieri's music. This second volume of his Choros serves up what are essentially concertos for clarinet, piano, viola and cello. It's truly vivacious music with a great sense of drama, while the additional *Flor de Tremembé* is a celebratory treat. (MB) ★★★★★

**Scott Ordway**
**The Clearing and the Forest**
SOLI Chamber Ensemble
*Acis Productions APL50069*

This project is as much about the live experience, so understandably some of its impact is lost. Ordway's thought-provoking musical essay on migration and the search for safety is certainly timely, though. Soul-stirring music and performances. (MB) ★★★★

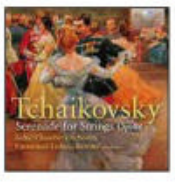
**Paganini**
**Quartets for Strings and Guitar**
Paganini Ensemble Vienna
*Dynamic CDS7938*

For those familiar primarily with Paganini's *24 Caprices*, this second volume of quartets may come as a surprise. There's a crisp and elegant sensibility, though the composer's instinct for dazzling showmanship finds expression in several taxing solos. Mario Hossen's Paganini Ensemble meets the challenges admirably. (CS) ★★★★

**Piazzolla**
**Variations on Buenos Aires**
Isabelle Ven Keulen Ensemble et al
*Berlin Classics 0302615BC*

In these new arrangements by bandoneonist Christian Gerber, the lush string accompaniments emphasise the melodrama of Piazzolla's works. Against this heightened backdrop the virtuosity of the solo ensemble really sparkles. (CS) ★★★★

**Tchaikovsky**
**Serenade for Strings, Op. 48 etc**
Baltic Chamber Orchestra et al
*Brilliant 96520*



The popular *Serenade* is showcased alongside rarities including arrangements of two string quartets. The orchestra's warm, cushioned sound is attractive, but a less reverberant acoustic might allow for more articulation and nuance. (CS) ★★★

**Weinberg**
**String Quartets Nos 2-4**
Silesian Quartet *CD Accord ACD291*

The Silesian Quartet has a natural feeling for its Polish compatriot, performing these surprisingly accessible works with ferocious energy and delicate subtlety as required. The works present a fascinating insight into Weinberg's development – he wrote No. 2 as a student, amending it 45 years later. (CS) ★★★

**Wilbye**
**Draw On Sweet Night**
I Fagiolini
*CORO COR16190*

John Wilbye was one of the finest English madrigalists, publishing around 75 madrigals in two collections in 1598 and 1609. I Fagiolini sing 25 of them here with a winning sweetness of tone and admirable care for text. It's a welcome balm. (RF) ★★★★

**A Ceremony of Psalms**
**Choral works by Drayton, Finzi, Park and Rutter**
St Mary's Singers, Abbey Brass
*Willowhayne Records FSR 191*

For all its organ and brass firepower and dramatic subject matter, Drayton's *A Ceremony of Psalms* still somehow lacks a punch. The choir sounds a touch threadbare in the Finzi and Rutter too. (JP) ★★

**Impulse**
**Works by Takemitsu, Joan Tower, R Clarke et al**
Jordan Bak (viola) et al
*Bright Shiny Things BSTC-0162*

Jamaican-American violist Bak digs deep for his debut recording, avoiding clichéd programming or crowd-pleasers. This sophisticated selection is considered and beautifully peformed, Bak showcasing his instrument's resonant power in solo and chamber works. (MB) ★★★★

**Inner Landscape**
**Works by Meredith Monk, Arvo Pärt, Terry Riley, Philip Glass**
Christina McMaster (piano)
*MCMaster Records 198003441439*

*Inner Landscape* celebrates the act of listening, bringing the modern ethos of wellbeing to the piano recital. The result is a broadly meditative journey, featuring minimalists and experimentalists, from Cage to Monk, Satie to Pärt, played with assurance. An album to inspire reflection. (RF) ★★★

**Multiple**
**Works by Tallis, Steve Reich et al**
Nic Pendlebury (electric viola)
*Orchid Classics ORC100196*

Albums for electric viola don't come along that often, but Pendlebury believes the instrument has an exciting voice. While there's a pleasing tanginess to Reich's multi-tracked *Electric Counterpoint*, Tallis's *Spem in Alium* sounds stilted. Riley's atmospherically looping *Dorian Reeds* comes off best. (RF) ★★★

**Stockholm Diary**
**Works by Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Salonen and Beamish**
Ostrobothnian CO *Alba ABCD467*

A wonderfully vibrant Schoenberg *Verklärte Nacht* and, played by Malin Broman, Esa-Pekka Salonen's engrossing *Lachen verlernt* for solo violin are the highlights of this well thought-out celebration of the Finnish ensemble's 50th anniversary. (JP) ★★★★

**Turning World**
**Works by Shiva Feshareki and Daphne Oram**
Kit Downes (organ); BBC Singers et al
*NMC D266*

Feshareki's *Aetherworld* is a bold and fascinating Josquin-inspired sonic landscape, melding overtone singing, organ and real-time electronics. The composer and turntablist also helped restore Daphne Oram's 1950 *Still Point*, a landmark orchestral-electronic work. (RF) ★★★★

***Reviewers:*** *Michael Beek* ***(MB),*** *Rebecca Franks* ***(RF),*** *Jeremy Pound* ***(JP),*** *Charlotte Smith* ***(CS)***

ALAMY

## The month in box-sets

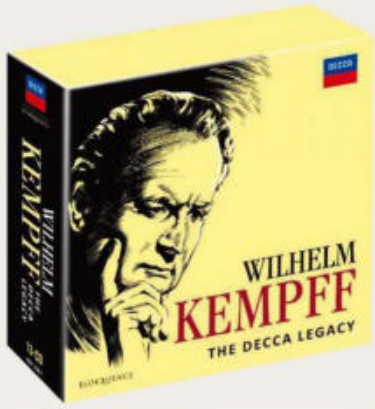
Avid audience: Cécile Ousset's playing is admired by conductor Aldo Ceccato

# From solo pianists to double orchestras

## This month's round-up focuses on keyboard greats, Strauss and Haydn

A grande dame of the piano, Cécile Ousset's recording career at the keyboard took a number of turns. ***The Complete Warner Recordings*** *(Warner Classics 9029643624)* date from 1982-91 when Ousset, now 86, was at the height of her success. Across 16 discs we are whisked through French solo piano repertoire from Ravel to Satie, but it's the big-boned Romantic piano concertos that are perhaps the real draw. Ousset's performances of the likes of Saint-Saëns, Liszt and Rachmaninov are spellbinding, the majority featuring a young Simon Rattle and the CBSO.

An earlier keyboard great, Wilhelm Kempff enjoyed years in the studio that have been well documented. ***The Decca Legacy*** *(Eloquence 4842267)*, though, is the first complete survey of the pianist's recordings for the label, and much more besides. As well as the expected Beethoven, the 13-disc collection also boasts highlights including Bach recordings on CD for the first time, inlcuding Choral Preludes arranged by Kempff, and newly remastered pre-war/wartime recordings for Polydor.




**This is the first full survey of Kempff's Decca recordings**

Chief conductor of two of the world's great orchestras, Andris Nelsons brings them together in ***Strauss Alliance*** *(DG 486 2040)*, a seven-disc set that takes in recordings made by the Boston Symphony and Leipzig Gewandhaus orchestras from 2017-21. In a scintillating anthology of Richard Strauss's orchestral works, the ensembles perform on three discs apiece, and recorded the *Festliches Präludium* together in Boston in 2019. Guest artists including cellist Yo-Yo Ma, pianist Yuja Wang and organist Olivier Latry are all part of the mix.

How long does it take to listen to all of Haydn's string quartets? Twenty-three-and-a-half hours, if you go for the Festetics String Quartet's newly collected survey. ***Haydn – Complete String Quartets*** *(Arcana A207)* sees the Hungarian ensemble perform the complete set on period instruments. Recorded from 1993-2006, it's a fascinating journey through the composer's oeuvre, a form he mastered over more than three decades, and by musicians who know this music inside-out.

# Books

## Our critics cast their eyes over this month's selection of books on classical music

### Critical Lives – Sergei Rachmaninoff
*Rebecca Mitchell*
*Reaktion Books 240pp (pb) £11.99*

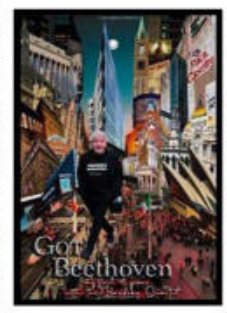
The conventional view of Rachmaninov as a dyed-in-the-wool purveyor of late-Romantic musical nostalgia is strongly challenged in this enthrallingly written book. Far from being completely out of step with the drastically changing cultural environment of the first half of the 20th century, Rachmaninov's music, according to Rebecca Mitchell, was entirely modern, its dark harmonies and brooding nature echoing 'a widespread sense of melancholy, uprootedness and "sickness" that seemed to define contemporary urban existence.' This argument particularly holds water for the works Rachmaninov composed between 1910 and 1917 in which tonal boundaries are extended or deliberately obscured, demonstrating how far the composer had travelled from the post-Tchaikovskian luxuriance of his Second Piano Concerto or Second Symphony.

Even after he chose to abandon Russia following the 1917 Revolution, Mitchell suggests that Rachmaninov responded in quite unexpected ways to his new existence in the United States, fervently embracing the cutting-edge technology of commercial recording, developing an unbridled passion for driving fast cars and demonstrating a keen awareness of some of the latest musical trends, a good example being the strong allusions to the music of Gershwin in his Fourth Piano Concerto. *Erik Levi* ★★★★★

No stick-in-the-mud: Rachmaninov was entirely modern in his outlook

### Got Beethoven – My First 40 Years with the Brodsky Quartet
*Paul Cassidy*
*Troubador 328pp (pb) £12.99*

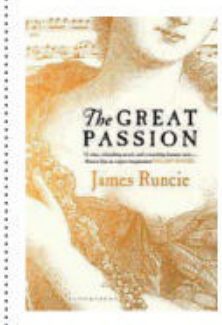
This year sees the Brodsky Quartet celebrate 50 years of passionate, innovative music-making at the top of the profession. To coincide, its violist of 40 years Paul Cassidy follows his childhood memoir *Get Beethoven* with a helter-skelter, fiercely convivial account of life with the quartet across the decades. *Got Beethoven* describes the 'extreme highs and devastating lows' of life on the road, galloping through tours, residencies and recordings via a succession of anecdotes full of drama and teeming with larger-than-life characters alive and dead. Of the latter, Shostakovich figures most poignantly as the Brodskys champion his quartets through changing times, perceptions and personnel.




But it's the former to whom Cassidy shows most devotion alongside his daughters and wife Jackie, also his cellist colleague. With exuberant hat-tips – and not infrequent scowls – towards a slew of composers and fellow musicians, promoters, hosts, chauffeurs and more, he's at his most eloquent when popping balloons of cultural snobbery. Star of the show in that regard is Elvis Costello, with whom collaboration opened important doors for the Brodsky to the worlds of pop and rock. *Steph Power* ★★★

### The Great Passion
*James Runcie*
*Bloomsbury 272pp (hb) £16.99*

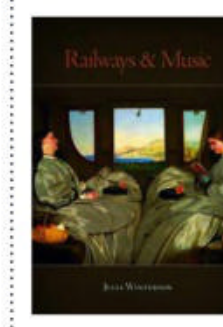
Aaron Copland described Bach as the one musician 'who came closest to composing without human flaw.' But what of the man himself? Was Bach as orderly a character as his music? More recent studies have overturned any such notion, among them John Eliot Gardiner's exuberant 2013 study which offered a 'corrective to the old hagiolatry'. Written with clarity and beauty, James Runcie's novel follows in these footsteps to explore Bach as a complex character, at once forbidding and warm-hearted.




*The Great Passion* is a fictionalised account of Bach's creation of the *St Matthew Passion* in 1727, narrated by one Stefan Silbermann, a talented chorister who finds himself lonely and adrift at Leipzig's Saint Thomas School. 'The Cantor' takes Silbermann under his wing and invites him to live at the family home, so Silbermann witnesses first-hand both Bach's extraordinary talent but also the tragedy that befalls the household that year. Just as Bach's music allows us 'to understand the depths of all our sorrows... and lift our hearts with unexpected joy', so *The Great Passion* offers an affecting exploration of the redemptive power of music and love. *Kate Wakeling* ★★★★★

### Railways & Music
*Julia Winterson*
*Huddersfield 328pp (pb) £25*

From the broadsheet ballads of the early railway-building navvies to Marie Lloyd singing 'Oh! Mr Porter, what shall I do' with many a naughty innuendo; from Berlioz's *Le Chant des chemins de fer* to Honegger's futuristic *Pacific 231*; from Percy Grainger's *Arrival Platform Humlet* to Billy Strayhorn's *Take the 'A' Train*, the rise of the railways and the experience of travelling on them has inspired a vast array of concert and folk music, jazz and popular song. So vast, indeed, that Dr Winterson is obliged, for reasons of space, to exclude a chapter on railway music in films – so no mention of Richard Rodney Bennett's score for *Murder on the Orient Express*, although Britten's music for *Night Mail* receives a simple analysis. In general, her approach is to offer snippets of railway history and composers' lives with a closer focus on a selection of representative pieces, together with a smattering of music examples, period pictures and so on. No attempt is made to offer socio-aesthetic analogies between, say, rail travel and symphonic form. Still, as far as it goes, the book is lively and informative. *Bayan Northcott* ★★★




GETTY

# Audio choice

*Chris Haslam* chooses the best hi-fi equipment for your classical music listening

## THIS MONTH: FLOORSTANDING SPEAKERS

Live and kicking: Klipsch's vibrant RP-8060FA II speakers

BEST FOR LIVE PERFORMANCE

### Klipsch RP-8060FA II £2,999

Klipsch's Reference Premiere series offers 11 options including bookshelf, surround sound, subwoofers and centre channels, so you can tailor a system to suit your home and budget. The flagship RP-8060FA II are imposing floorstanding speakers with excellent quality cabinets. With upward firing Dolby Atmos speakers hidden in the top, their performance is forceful and dynamic, while their spun copper eight-inch Cerametallic woofers with a distortion-absorbing aluminium Faraday ring add depth and power to low frequencies. And their Tractrix horn technology works wonders with the higher frequencies, perfect for live concert recordings and movies. **klipsch.com**

BEST FOR VALUE

### Q Acoustics 3050i £699

A few years old now, these floorstanders remain the best-value around. Available in black, white, walnut or grey, the MDF cabinet features a special bracing structure that helps minimise unwanted vibrations, while HPE (Helmholtz Pressure Equaliser) tubing technology helps to equalise the air pressure inside, eliminating resonance. Playing hi-res pieces from my laptop (using Tidal) combined with my Marantz HD-AMP1, I was thrilled by the energy on offer. They're warm, engaging and offer plenty of punch and, impressively, don't complain too much if they're positioned in less-than-ideal spaces. **qacoustics.co.uk**

BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE BEST BUY

BEST IN TEST

### KEF LS60 Wireless £6,000

Launched for KEF's 60th anniversary, these all-in-one streaming stereo speakers are something special. They're elegantly slim – remarkably so, given that they have 1,400W of combined power – and will play from virtually any source up to 24-bit/192kHz. There's support for AirPlay 2, Google Chromecast, Spotify Connect and Tidal Connect, to name a few, plus inputs for HDMI (eARC), optical, coax, Aux-in, and a subwoofer, not that you'll need one.

The speaker configuration boasts a single Uni-Q driver – with a 19mm tweeter sat in the middle of the 10cm driver – and four back-to-back 5.25-inch drivers that brilliantly enable the low, mid and high frequencies of whatever you're playing to radiate from a single point, creating a huge soundstage and virtually no sweet spot.

Whatever I played through the LS60 Wireless sounded gobsmackingly good, and I'm in awe of how well the slender speakers handled lower frequencies. The timing and authority are truly remarkable for a streaming system, with the scale and power of a full orchestra and the nuance of a single instrument both thrillingly present. Getting to spend time at home with speakers as good as these was an absolute privilege. **KEF.com**

**How big?** Floorstanding speakers dominate most living rooms, but offer exceptional sound across a vast soundstage. Cheaper models may be impressively loud, but can cause nasty vibrations if design corners have been cut. The best designs have internal bracing which prevent resonance colouring the sound.

**Speaker and amp pairing** It's rare to find completely incompatible speakers and amps these days, but before you buy do check that the ohms of both are compatible (speakers usually carry ratings between four and eight ohms; amps typically four to 16 ohms) and – to make a huge generalisation – that your amplifier is 50 per cent more powerful than your speakers.

**Speaker positions** Floorstanding speakers are designed to project sound at your ear level when sitting. Ideally, you should keep the speakers well spaced and at least 30cm away from any surfaces to get the best result.

# Jazz

*Garry Booth*'s set includes a lyrical live album and some fabulous first timers

JAZZ CHOICE

## Dazzling double debut

New York guitarist Mary Halvorson sets out her stall with this remarkable dual selection

Original thinker: Mary Halvorson stands out

### Mary Halvorson

**Amaryllis**
Mary Halvorson (guitar), Jacob Garchik (trombone), Adam O'Farrill (trumpet) et al
*Nonesuch 7559791273*

**Belladonna**
Mary Halvorson (guitar), Mivos Quartet
*Nonesuch 7559791037*

Mary Halvorson has been lighting up New York's alt-jazz scene for 15 years, with a palette that ranges from jagged monochrome etching to glowing technicolour soundscaping. But a bigger stage surely beckons, this stunning Nonesuch double debut confirming the 41 year old as an original thinker on a par with Anthony Braxton – even Ornette Coleman.

*Amaryllis* is a powerful six-song suite executed by a newly formed sextet of dynamic improvisers. Full of sonic surprises, the music nevertheless retains a coherent thread with arrangements that frequently place Halvorson more as a texturalist than soloist. The band is a revelation, its dazzling brass and ringing vibraharp carried aloft by a surging rhythm section.

By contrast, *Belladonna*'s five pieces were through-composed for the Mivos Quartet and augmented by Halvorson's guitar improvisations. Without the band there's more focus on Halvorson's technique; longer, sonorous lines are strung with bright notes or cranky counterpoint melodies overlaying the quartet's intense and precise accompaniment. ★★★★★

MICHAEL WILSON, GETTY

## July round-up

Prolific trumpeter, composer ***Dave Douglas*** is a restless soul. His latest music, ***Secular Psalms***, was

commissioned by Ghent's Handelsbeurs Concert Hall to celebrate the 600th anniversary of the Ghent Altarpiece painted by Jan van Eyck. His response – a suite of 10 pieces – is as multidimensional and intriguing as the storied masterpiece itself. Tapping into Latin Mass, medieval folk songs, the early renaissance composer Guillaume DuFay, as well as improvised music, and making use of lute and serpent plus electronics, vocals and conventional jazz instruments, Douglas has produced an unearthly epic that's pure genius. *(Greenleaf GRE1090)* ★★★★★

American guitarist ***John Scofield*** has been making hip, small-group jazz music for nearly 50 years and this eponymously titled album is his debut as a solo artist. It took an enforced lockdown, with only a loop machine for company, to persuade him to develop a more 'delicate' approach. Seclusion also added a mischievous warped factor to his technique. The sound is still recognisably 'Sco' – reverberating,

even clangourous – but with added note bending. The selection has a classic Scofield feel however, with numbers like Buddy Holly's 'Not Fade Away' and Hank Williams's 'You Win Again' set against boppy standard tunes like 'It Could Happen To You'. Sco's own writing is reliable as ever, with five spicy original tunes in the mix. *(ECM 6024 4531164 4)* ★★★★

Norwegian pianist ***Espen Eriksen***'s trio has garnered a well-earned reputation for creating modern jazz music that is quietly dramatic, deeply felt and easy to relate to. Five studio albums across 12 years have produced a catalogue of tunes that are melancholic and unashamedly sentimental. What's been missing until now is a live concert album – so ***In The Mountains*** is very welcome indeed. British saxophonist Andy Sheppard

is featured on three tracks and sounds so at home in Eriksen's minimalist nordic soundscape. The trio's ominous reading of Krzysztof Komeda's theme from *Rosemary's Baby* rounds off a hugely rewarding programme. *(Rune Grammofon RCD 2227)* ★★★★

***The Lights Are Always On***, the latest trio album from ***Lynne Arriale***, is the stalwart pianist's response to the destabilising socio-political events rocking the US recently. Elegant and optimistic, the music embodies Michelle Obama's advice, 'when they go low, we go high'. 'The Notorious RBG',

dedicated to Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the late Supreme Court Justice, has a suitably implacable momentum; 'Sounds Like America', has a folksy, anthemic theme that looks forward to the country's recovery. Creative and empathetic accompaniment flows from drummer Enoch Jamal 'EJ' Strickland and double-bassist Jasper Somsen. *(Challenge Records CR73532)* ★★★★

The painfully punning title of ***Ewan Bleach***'s debut album, ***Ewan The Night 'n' The Music***, belies a beautiful recording of standards drawn from the golden era of pre-war jazz. The young multi-

reeds player has dedicated himself to celebrating the early styles of jazz and his sepia-toned sound is a fixture on the London scene. Every tune is lovingly interpreted and rendered with relaxed reverence. Bleach's clarinet lead on Bechet's *Si Tu Vois Ma Mere* is sublime. Colin Good, Jim Ydstie and John Kelly provide suave and suasive accompaniment throughout. *(Old Style Records)* ★★★★

## TAKE FIVE

An interview with today's finest jazz musicians

In the moment: Cleveland Watkiss is a vocal virtuoso

## This month: Cleveland Watkiss

It isn't that surprising to hear that the latest album from London-based jazz vocalist Cleveland Watkiss is a selection of reggae dancehall classics. The award-winning singer has covered many genres in and outside jazz through his 40-plus year career and he comes full circle with *The Great Jamaican Songbook* (reviewed in the May issue). His first encounter with jazz was on a tour with a reggae outfit in 1981 when Jamaican saxophonist Michael 'Bami' Rose lent him a mix tape.

'It was bebop-era artists like Miles Davis, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie and Clifford Brown,' he recalls. 'I had never heard this music before. I was blown away and it got me interested in making the same sounds I was hearing with my voice.'

> 'Before long we were part of a huge explosion of British jazz...'

Watkiss studied at the London School of Singing with opera coach Arnold Rose and at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama; in the early 1980s he came to the attention of saxophonist Courtney Pine who was putting together the Jazz Warriors big band, a hot house for London's young, black talent. 'Initially we were a bit too much for the jazz police! But before long we were part of a huge explosion of British jazz and on the cover of magazines,' he says. 'The band's continuing legacy is the many jazz musicians you can now see touring the world.'

Since then, Watkiss has worked with diverse artists: 'I'm as excited by singing Bach with Nigel Kennedy as going on stage with drum-and-bass artists Fabio & Grooverider.'

Jazz is the constant, however, and Watkiss relishes the pure thrill of improvising, in a club setting, with small group Black Top, alongside multi-instrumentalist Orphy Robinson and keys player Pat Thomas. 'Someone once said to me, "Improvisation is composition sped up; composition is improvisation slowed down" and I still think about that,' he explains. 'There's no plan. We get on the stage and perform. We're connected to harmony and melody but in the moment. You have to make music that communicates.' ***Garry Booth***

# Reviews Index


**Albéniz** Iberia, Books 1-4 87
**JS Bach** Mass in B minor 80
**Mason Bates**
Philharmonia Fantastique 92
**Beethoven** Cello Sonatas Nos 1-5 84
Diabelli Variations 87
Songs 80
**Richard Birchall**
Clarinet Concerto 74
**Brahms** Ein deutches Requiem 92
Piano Quintet 85
String Quintet No. 2 85
Symphonies Nos 3 & 4 70
**Bruhns** Choral Works 92
**Debussy** La damoiselle élue 92
Nocturnes 92
**Elgar** Choral Works 81
**Cheryl Frances-Hoad** Excelsus 92
**Robert Groslot**
Concerto for Bass Guitar 92
**Guarnieri** Orchestral Works 92
**Hahn** Premières valses 87
Le rossignol perdu 87
**Handel** Caio Fabbricio 78
La Resurrezione 68
**Haydn** String Quartets 93
**Heinz Holliger** Lunea 78
**Hummel** Bassoon Concerto 75
**Janáček** Glagolitic Mass 81
Sinfonietta 81
**Mahler** Symphony No. 4 70
**E Mayer** Overtures 70
Sinfonie Militair No. 3 70
**Mendelssohn**
Violin Concerto in E minor 75
**Monteverdi**
Il ritorno di Ulisse in Patria 79
**Jessie Montgomery** Soul Force 92
**Mozart** Adagio in C, K356 88
Bassoon Concerto 75
Clarinet Concerto 74
Clarinet Quintet 74
Così fan tutte 79
Fantasias, K396, K397, K475 88
Minuet in D, K 355 88
Rondo in D, K 485 88
Piano Sonata No. 13 in B flat 88
**Scott Ordway**
The Clearing and the Forest 92
**Paganini**
Quartets for Strings and Guitar 92
**Richard Pantcheff** Organ Works 88
**Pejačević** Piano Concerto, Op. 33 71
Symphony in F sharp minor 71
**Piazzolla**
Variations on Buenos Aires 92
**F Price** Orchestral Works 92
**Prokofiev**
Piano Sonatas Nos 1, 3 & 5 88
Visions fugitives 88
**Rachmaninov** Trio élégiaque 85
**L Rose** Piano Trio 85
**Saint-Saëns** Africa, Op. 89 74
Allegro appassionato, Op. 70 74
Piano Concertos Nos 1 & 2 74
Rapsodie d'Auvergne 74
Valse-Caprice 'Wedding Cake' 74
**Schoenberg**
String Quartets Nos 1 & 3 84
**Schubert** Die schöne Müllerin 81
**R Schumann**
Kinderszenen, Op. 15 92
**Shostakovich**
The Age of Gold Suite 71
The Limpid Stream Suite 71
Suite for Jazz Orchestra No. 1 71
Suite for Variety Orchestra 71
Symphony No. 5 71
Tahiti Trot 71
**Sinding**
Romance in D, Op. 100 75
Violin Concerto No .1 75
**Smetana** Piano Trio 85
**Still** American Suite 75
Pastorela 75
Summerland 75
Threnody: In Memoriam
Jean Sibelius 75
Violin Suite etc 75
**R Strauss** Orchestral Works 93
**Tailleferre** Piano Works 88
**Tchaikovsky**
Festival Coronation March 72
Italian Capriccio, Op. 45 72
Serenade for Strings 92
Symphonies Nos 1 & 3 etc 72
**Vanhal** Bassoon Concerto 75
**Vaughan Williams**
Folk Songs from Newfoundland 82
The Lark Ascending 72
Norfolk Rhapsody No. 1 72
Symphonies Nos 7 & 9 72
**Verdi** La traviata 79
**Weill** Symphony No. 2 71
**Weinberg**
String Quartets Nos 1, 7 & 11 85
String Quartets Nos 2-4 92
**Wilbye** Madrigals 92

**COLLECTIONS**
**Alter Ego** David Orlowsky, David Bergmüller 85
**Bassoon Steppes**
Lola Descours, Paloma Kouider 86
**Beethoven Symphonies, Vol. 2**
Tessa Uys, Ben Schoeman 89
**Brahms The Progressive, Vol. 2**
Pina Napolitano et al 75
**Cello Concertos from Northern Germany** Gulrim Choï et al 76
**A Ceremony of Psalms**
St Mary's Singers et al 92
**The Complete Warner Recordings**
Cécile Ousset et al 93
**The Decca Legacy**
Wilhelm Kempf 93
**Farewells**
Jakub Józef Orliński, Michał Biel 80
**Impulse** Jordan Bak et al 92
**Inner Landscape**
Christina McMaster 93
**Mandolin on Stage**
Raffaele La Ragione et al 76
**Le monde selon George Antheil**
Patricia Kopatchinskaja et al 86
**A Monument for Beethoven**
Yoav Levanon 89
**Multiple** Nic Pendlebury 93
**Musa Italiana**
Filarmonica della Scala 73
**Nazareno** LSO et al 76
**Ready or Not** Palaver Strings 73
**This Be Her Verse**
Golda Schultz, Jonathan Ware 82
**Trennung...** Carolyn Sampson, Kristian Bezuidenhout 82
**Shining Night** Anne Akiko Meyers, Jason Vieux, Fabio Biondi 86
**Solitude** Joo Yeon Sir 89
**Stockholm Diary** Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra 93
**Turning World** BBC Singers et al 93

# Live choice

## *Paul Riley* picks the month's best concert and opera highlights in the UK

### New Music Biennial
**Southbank Centre, London, 1-3 July**
**Web:** *southbankcentre.co.uk*
From electronic Middle Eastern rave-jazz to a meditation on breathing uniting Armonico and saxophonist Amy Dickson, the tenth-anniversary edition takes the pulse of contemporary music in all its diversity. The National Youth Orchestra immerses itself in Errollyn Wallen's *Mighty River*, and there's anarchy from the London Sinfonietta.

### Opera Holland Park
**Ilchester Place, London, 1-3 July**
**Web:** *operahollandpark.com*
Delius's *Margot la rouge* and Mark Adamos's *Little Women* fly the operatic flag over London W8, but a parallel song series includes a three-day Schubertiad devoted to the song cycles, sung by baritones Roderick Williams (*Winterreise*) and Julien Van Mellaerts (*Die schöne Müllerin*) and mezzo Ema Nikolovska (*Schwanengesang*, coupled with the premiere of Errollyn Wallen's *The Lake*).

### Academy of Ancient Music
**Barbican, London, 1 July**
**Web:** *barbican.org.uk*
Laurence Cummings's debut season as artistic director concludes with a programme given over entirely to Mozart. Bookended by the ballet music from *Idomeneo* and the 'Jupiter' Symphony, the composer's Concerto for three keyboards, K242 assigns the solo fireworks to Cummings, erstwhile director Richard Egarr and Robert Levin.

### City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra
**Symphony Hall, Birmingham, 2 July**
**Web:** *cbso.co.uk*
One hundred-and-twenty-five years after it was premiered at the Birmingham Triennial Music Festival, Sir Charles Villiers Stanford's Requiem is coming home. University of Birmingham Voices supply the vocal heft for a performance conducted by Martyn Brabbins (See 'Backstage with…', right). Soprano Carolyn Sampson heads the solo team.

Bracing Brahms: Elisabeth Leonskaja tackles the early sonatas in Oxford

### Christian Gerhaher
**Wigmore Hall, London, 3 & 6 July**
**Web:** *wigmore-hall.org.uk*
Who's afraid of Hugo Wolf? Certainly not the German baritone, who revisits the Italian and Spanish song books. Mezzo Anna Lucia Richter is his companion for the Italian leg, while three nights later soprano Julia Kleiter accompanies him to Spain – Gerold Huber is the pianist for both excursions.

### London Conchord Ensemble
**Gower Peninsula, 4-6 July**
**Web:** *gowerfestival.org*
In residence for the first three days of the Gower Festival, the London Conchord Ensemble shares its musical largesse in churches in Newton, Reynoldston and Oystermouth. Schubert's 'Trout' Quintet is tickled on opening night, and nonets by Martinů and Spohr partner Beethoven on the last.

### Buxton Festival Opera
**Buxton, 8-22 July**
**Web:** *buxtonfestival.co.uk*
Inspired by Sir Walter Scott's *The Lady of the Lake*, Rossini's *La donna del lago* launches an operatic strand that includes Hasse's *Antonio e Cleopatra*, Jonathan Dove's *Mansfield Park* and Tom Coult's *Violet*. The Rossini, conducted by Adrian Kelly and directed by Jacopo Spirei, has Irish soprano Máire Flavin – making her debut at the festival – as the much-pursued Elena, while Buxton regular Catherine Carby plays Malcom.

### Orchestra of the Swan
**Hellens Manor, Much Marcle, 7 July**
**Web:** *orchestraoftheswan.org*
The harp reveries of Debussy's *Danse sacrée et danse profane* and Ravel's *Introduction and Allegro* are bolstered by arrangements of Satie and Rameau in a Franco-American dialogue that fields landscapes by Cage and William Grant Still, plus works by John Adams and Philip Glass.

### Gonzaga Band
**NCEM St Margaret's, York, 10 July**
**Web:** *ncem.co.uk*
'Connections' is the thread that binds this year's York Early Music Festival, and Venice insinuates itself into several programmes including the Gabrieli Consort's recreation of the 1595 coronation of Doge Marino Grimani. The Gonzaga Band turns the clock forward, however, and to music from the class of 1629 by Schütz, Monteverdi, Castello and Marini.

### Classical Mixtape
**Gloucester Cathedral, 11 July**
**Web:** *cheltenhamfestivals.com*
Cheltenham Festival might be ending on an elevated high with Mahler's 'Symphony of a Thousand' (also in Gloucester Cathedral), but first it renews its penchant for the 'mixtape'. Dispensing seamless soundbites from platforms around the cathedral are Manchester Collective, accordionist Samuele Telari and the Choir of Merton College, Oxford.

### Mladenović-Wilson Duo
**Portico of Ards, Portaferry, 17 July**
**Web:** *porticoards.com*
Irish composer-pianist Ian Wilson and violinist Dušica Mladenović give the premiere of a new version of *Satie Ungraved*, Wilson's 2018 concerto reworking of Satie's *Socrate*. The duo also performs Wilson's *From*

*the Book of Longing* in a recital that prefaces Arvo Pärt's *Fratres* with Schubert.

### Scottish Chamber Orchestra
**Glenrothes and Musselburgh, 22 & 23 July**
**Web:** *sco.org.uk*
The orchestra's summer tour resumes, visiting some 25 Scottish towns and cities, and for the first time invites along the SCO Chorus. In Glenrothes and Musselburgh, Philip Higham is the soloist in Haydn's C major Cello Concerto, framed by symphonic Mozart and Vranický. Maxim Emelyanychev conducts.

### Fretwork
**Great Hall, Dartington, 24 July**
**Web:** *dartington.org*
The Dartington Music Summer School and Festival opens in 16th-century Germany, but the following day viol consort Fretwork turns spotlights on England and the 400th birthday of Matthew Locke, whose consort music is paired with that of his pupil Henry Purcell. There's also music by Gavin Bryars, inspired by Purcell.

### Triple Concert
**Castle Howard, 27 July**
**Web:** *ryedalefestival.com*
Troubadour Trails and '100 years of jazz in 99 minutes' are among Ryedale Festival's 2022 boasts, but the traditional triple-decker concert at Castle Howard remains a must-hear. In the Long Gallery, baritone Ashley Riches and pianist Joseph Middleton navigate a 'Musical Zoo', the Great Hall resounds to Mozart's Clarinet Quintet, and in the Chapel, the Gesualdo Six contemplates Compline.

### Music in Country Churches
**St Margaret's, Cley-next-the-Sea, 26 July**
**Web:** *musicincountrychurches.org.uk*
Two Norfolk concerts crown the 32nd series parachuting music into exquisite ecclesiastical spaces. Directed by Stephanie Gonley, the English Chamber Orchestra succumbs to serenades by Elgar, Dag Wirén and Tchaikovsky. Craig Ogden premieres William Lovelady's new Guitar Concerto.

### Pavel Kolesnikov
**Paxton House, Berwick-upon-Tweed, 27 & 28 July** **(see p58)**
**Web:** *musicatpaxton.co.uk*
It's 100 years since the death of Marcel Proust, and Kolesnikov marks the centenary with a programme orbiting works by Proust's sometime partner Reynaldo Hahn spliced with Schubert, Franck and Fauré. The following day he's joined by piano duo partner Samson Tsoy for more Schubert, plus Brahms.

### Corbridge Chamber Music Festival
**St Andrew's Church, Corbridge, 28-31 July**
**Web:** *corbridgefestival.co.uk*
Guests joining the Gould Piano Trio and clarinettist Robert Plane in Roman Corbridge include the Elias Quartet and composer-in-residence Piers Hellawell, two of whose works are stitched into four days also featuring the music of Pamela Harrison.

### Elisabeth Leonskaja
**St John the Evangelist Church, Oxford, 30 July**
**Web:** *oxfordpianofestival.com*
The young Brahms's barn-storming piano sonatas wowed the Schumanns but are intermittent visitors to recital programmes these days. Leonskaja braves all three for an Oxford Piano Festival that also welcomes Ingrid Fliter, Víkingur Ólafsson and Nikolai Lugansky.

### Philharmonia & Festival Chorus
**Hereford Cathedral, 30 July**
**Web:** *3choirs.org*
The Three Choirs Festival opens with Dvořák's Requiem, musters eight premieres alongside works from over 40 living composers, and ends with one of its own: Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* (the very text Dvořák had rejected in favour of writing his Requiem). For the Elgar, conductor Geraint Bowen assembles a compelling trio of soloists: mezzo Sarah Connolly, tenor Nicky Spence and bass-baritone Neal Davies.

### Aurora Orchestra
**Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden, 31 July**
**Web:** *saffronhall.com*
For nearly a decade, the Aurora Orchestra's performances from memory have become something of a calling card, and here they duly oblige with Beethoven's Symphony No. 5. But, even with them playing from the score, Shostakovich's Violin Concerto No. 1 should be no less of an edge-of-seat experience, what with Patricia Kopatchinskaja as the soloist.

BEN EALOVEGA, MARCO BORGGREVE

## BACKSTAGE WITH... Conductor Martyn Brabbins

An operatic approach: 'I'm going to aim for a very vivid presentation'

**When you conduct Stanford's Requiem on 2 July, it will be one of very few performances the work has had in recent years. Why has such a substantial piece been so neglected?**
Much of Stanford's music has been neglected – not just the Requiem, but also the Te Deum, the Stabat Mater and several operas too. It's hard to say why exactly, but I suppose he was eclipsed, in a way, by those who came soon after him. His Requiem was composed in 1896, just before Elgar started producing incredibly powerful and resilient choral works such as *Caractacus* and then, of course, the great trio of *The Dream of Gerontius*, *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom*.

**How was Stanford regarded by his contemporaries?**
He had his admirers plus a certain pedigree at the time, and was in fact once commissioned to write an opera for La Scala in Milan, though it never got performed. He actually played his Requiem all the way through to Elgar and showed the score to Verdi. He certainly had a fantastic compositional technique, so we should give both him and the piece their due.

**Can you describe the Requiem?**
As with many such choral works of this period, you get the big fugal moments, the wonderful quartets of soloists, some purely orchestral writing – and the amalgamation of all these various elements does add up to quite a substantial statement. It's a very heartfelt work that was dedicated to the memory of the artist Frederic Leighton, who was a friend of his, and it has an honesty to it. At times there's a very direct and simple expression of emotion, and elsewhere the emotion is more reverential and restrained. As a conductor, I'm going to aim for a very operatic and vivid presentation of the text and the drama that is within it rather than present it through the prism of the church music for which Stanford is largely known.

**On the scale of Requiems, does it have a Verdi-style hell-and-damnation feel to it, or a more Fauré-like gentle acceptance?**
It's somewhere in between, I'd say, though leaning more towards optimism – there are certainly moments of radiance. It's terrific that we are being given the chance to perform it. We have a great orchestra and hall, a lovely team of soloists and, though I've not worked with them before, what I imagine will be a very vibrant and youthful chorus. Everyone will be totally committed, and I think it should be quite a special event!

# TV&Radio

Your complete guide to what's on Radio 3 this month, plus TV highlights

Ukrainian unity: soprano Liudmyla Monastyrska sings on 31 July

## JULY'S RADIO 3 LISTINGS

*Schedules may be subject to alteration. For up-to-date listings see Radio Times*

### Three to look out for

*Alan Davey*, the controller of BBC Radio 3, picks out three great moments to tune into this July

**Rhythms of Revolution**
Donald Macleod and pianist Clare Hammond uncover the overlooked music and dramatic life of French composer Hélène de Montgeroult, whose lyrical keyboard writing was astonishingly ahead of its time. She lived against the backdrop of revolutionary Paris – and her musical skills saved her head from the guillotine.
*Composer of the Week: 11-15 July, 12 noon*

**Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra**
This special Prom welcomes the newly formed Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra, made up of Ukrainian refugees and players from Europe's top ensembles. With a programme featuring Ukrainian composer Valentin Silvestrov, plus Chopin, Beethoven and Brahms, it's set to be a remarkable demonstration of the power of music over adversity.
*Prom 19a: 31 July, 10.30am*

**WOMAD**
Lopa Kothari takes us on a kaleidoscopic journey across musical cultures as Radio 3 joins the festival's 40th birthday celebrations for a weekend of special broadcasts, including live sessions and interviews.
*WOMAD: 30 July, 5.15-6.15pm; 31 July, time TBC*

**COTW** = Composer of the Week

### 1 FRIDAY

**6.30-9am Breakfast**
**9am-12 noon Essential Classics**
**12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week (COTW)** Billy Strayhorn (rpt)
**1-2pm Lunchtime Concert**
**2-4.30pm Afternoon Concert**
**4.30-5pm The Listening Service**
**5-7pm In Tune**
**7-7.30pm In Tune** Mixtape
**7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert** from Glasgow Royal Concert Hall. Walton *Scapino*, Rachmaninov *Piano Concerto No. 2*, Elgar *Symphony No.1*. Lise de la Salle (piano), Royal Scottish National Orchestra/Thomas Søndergård
**10-10.45pm The Verb**
**10.45-11pm The Essay**
**11pm-1am Late Junction**

### 2 SATURDAY

**7-9am Breakfast**
**9-11.45am Record Review**
**11.45am-12.30pm Music Matters**
**12.30-1pm This Classical Life**
**1-3pm Inside Music**
**3-4pm Sound of Cinema**
**4-5pm Music Planet**
**5-6.30pm J to Z**
**6.30-10pm Opera on 3** Wagner *Parsifal*. Opera North/Richard Farnes
**10pm-12am New Music Show**
**12am-1am Freeness**

### 3 SUNDAY

**7-9am Breakfast**
**9am-12 noon Sunday Morning**
**12 noon-1pm Private Passions** Gwen Adshead
**1-2pm Lunchtime Concert** (rpt)
**2-3pm The Early Music Show**
**3-4pm Choral Evensong**
**4-5pm Jazz Record Requests**
**5-5.30pm The Listening Service**
**5.30-6.45pm Words and Music**
**6.45-7.30pm Sunday Feature** Thomas LaRue Jones, the Black Cantor
**7.30-9pm Drama on 3** Unicorns, almost (rpt)
**9-11pm Record Review Extra**
**11pm-12am Sunday Night Series**
**12-12.30am The Music and Meditation Podcast**

### 4 MONDAY

**6.30-9am Breakfast**
**9am-12 noon Essential Classics**
**12 noon-1pm COTW** Rameau
**1-2pm Lunchtime Concert** Trio Mediaeval at Wigmore Hall
**2-4.30pm Afternoon Concert**
**4.30-5pm New Generation Artists**
**5-7pm In Tune**
**7-7.30pm In Tune** Mixtape
**7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert**
**10-10.45pm Music Matters**
**10.45-11pm The Essay**
**11pm-12.30am Night Tracks**

### 5 TUESDAY

**6.30am-1pm As Mon 4 July**
**1-2pm Lunchtime Concert**
**2-5pm Afternoon Concert**
**5-7pm In Tune**
**7-7.30pm In Tune** Mixtape
**7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert** *This Classical Life* Live from Alexandra Palace. Jess Gillam with Simon Höfele (trumpet), Ella Taylor (soprano) and Cassie Kinoshi (composer). BBC Concert Orchestra/Jonathan Bloxham
**10pm-12.30am As Mon 4 July**

### 6 WEDNESDAY

**6.30am-1pm As Mon 4 July**
**1-2pm Lunchtime Concert**
**2-4pm Afternoon Concert**
**4-5pm Choral Evensong**
**5-7pm In Tune**
**7-7.30pm In Tune** Mixtape
**7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert** from Barbican. Beethoven *Piano Sonatas Nos 8 'Pathetique' & 23 'Appassionata'*, Sibelius *6 Bagatelles*, Larcher *New Commission* (UK premiere), Chopin *Polonaise No. 7*. Paul Lewis (piano)
**10-10.45pm Free Thinking**
**10.45-11pm The Essay**
**11pm-12.30am Night Tracks**

### 7 THURSDAY

**6.30am-1pm As Mon 4 July**
**1-2pm Lunchtime Concert**
**2-5pm Afternoon Concert**
**5-7pm In Tune**
**7-7.30pm In Tune** Mixtape
**7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert** from Ulster Hall, Belfast. Beethoven *Piano Concerto No. 5 'Emperor'*, George Walker *Lyric for Strings*, Shostakovich *Symphony No. 9*. Barry Douglas (piano), Ulster Orchestra/Jamie Phillips
**10-10.45pm Free Thinking**
**10.45-11pm The Essay**
**11-11.30pm Night Tracks**
**11.30pm-12.30am Unclassified** with Elizabeth Alker

### 8 FRIDAY

**6.30am-1pm As Mon 4 July**
**1-2pm Lunchtime Concert**
**2-4.30pm Afternoon Concert**
**4.30-5pm The Listening Service**
**5-7pm In Tune**
**7-7.45pm In Tune** Mixtape
**7.45-10pm Radio 3 in Concert** from Barbican. Ravel *Valses nobles et sentimentales*, Murail *Piano Concerto (UK premiere)*, Vaughan Williams *Symphony No. 4*. François-Frédéric Guy (piano), BBC Symphony Orchestra/Ryan Wigglesworth
**10-10.45pm The Verb**
**10.45-11pm The Essay**
**11pm-1am Late Junction**

### 9 SATURDAY

**7-9am Breakfast**
**9-11.45am Record Review**
**11.45am-12.30pm Music Matters**
**12.30-1pm This Classical Life**
**1-3pm Inside Music**
**3-4pm Sound of Cinema**
**4-5pm Music Planet**
**5-6.30pm J to Z**
**6.30-10pm Opera on 3** TBC
**10pm-12am New Music Show**
**12am-1am Freeness**

### 10 SUNDAY

**7-9am Breakfast**
**9am-12 noon Sunday Morning**
**12 noon-1pm Private Passions** Katherine Rundell
**1-2pm Lunchtime Concert** (rpt)
**2-3pm The Early Music Show**
**3-4pm Choral Evensong**
**4-5pm Jazz Record Requests**
**5-5.30pm The Listening Service**
**5.30-6.45pm Words and Music**
**6.45-7.30pm Sunday Feature**

BENJAMIN EALOVEGA

**7.30-9pm Drama on 3** He Do The Waste Land in Different Voices
**9-11pm Record Review Extra**
**11pm-12am Sunday Night Series**

## 11 MONDAY

**6.30-9am Breakfast**
**9am-12 noon Essential Classics**
**CHOICE 12 noon-1pm Composer of the Week** Hélène de Montgeroult
**1-2pm Lunchtime Concert**
**2-4.30pm Afternoon Concert**
**4.30-5pm New Generation Artists**
**5-7pm In Tune**
**7-7.30pm In Tune** Mixtape
**7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert**
**10-10.45pm Music Matters**
**10.45-11pm The Essay** Larkin and Believing
**11pm-12.30am Night Tracks**

## 12 TUESDAY

**6.30am-1pm As Mon 11 July**
**1-2pm Lunchtime Concert** Cheltenham Festival 2022
**2-5pm Afternoon Concert**
**5-7pm In Tune**
**7-7.30pm In Tune** Mixtape
**7.30 -10pm Radio 3 in Concert** from York Minster. The Choral Pilgrimage: a programme centred around Parry's *Songs of Farewell*. The Sixteen/Harry Christophers
**10pm-12.30am As Mon 11 July**

## 13 WEDNESDAY

**6.30am-1pm As Mon 11 July**
**1-2pm Lunchtime Concert** Cheltenham Festival 2022
**2-4pm Afternoon Concert**
**4-5pm Choral Evensong**
**5-7pm In Tune**
**7-7.30pm In Tune** Mixtape
**7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert** from Manchester Cathedral. A Venetian Coronation. Music by Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli. Gabrieli Consort/Paul McCreesh
**10-10.45pm Free Thinking**
**10.45-11pm The Essay** Larkin and Believing
**11pm-12.30am Night Tracks**

## 14 THURSDAY

**6.30am-1pm As Mon 11 July**
**1-2pm Lunchtime** Concert Cheltenham Festival 2022
**2-5pm Afternoon Concert**
**5-7pm In Tune**
**7-7.30pm In Tune** Mixtape
**7.30-10pm Radio 3 in Concert** from Bridgewater Hall, Manchester. Shostakovich *Symphony No. 10*, Florence Price *The Oak*, Gershwin *Piano Concerto*. Xiayin Wang (piano), BBC Philharmonic/Kerem Hasan
**10-10.45pm Free Thinking**
**10.45-11pm The Essay** Larkin and Believing
**11-11.30pm Night Tracks**
**11.30pm-12.30am Unclassified** with Elizabeth Alker

## 15 FRIDAY

**6.30am-1pm As Mon 11 July**
**1-2pm Lunchtime Concert** Cheltenham Festival 2022
**2-5pm Afternoon Concert**
**5-7.15pm In Tune**
**7.15-10pm First Night of the Proms 2022**. Verdi *Requiem*. Soloists (see details in Proms Listing p36), BBC Symphony Chorus, Crouch End Festival Chorus, BBC SO/Sakari Oramo
**10-10.45pm The Verb**
**10.45-11pm The Essay** Larkin and Believing
**11pm-1am Late Junction**

## 16 SATURDAY

**7-9am Breakfast**
**9-11.45am Record Review**
**11.45-12.30pm New Generation Artists**
**12.30-1pm This Classical Life**
**1-3pm Inside Music**
**3-4pm Sound of Cinema**
**4-5pm Music Planet**
**5-6.30pm J to Z**
**6.30-9.15pm Prom 2**. Vaughan Williams *Thomas Tallis Fantasia*, Huw Watkins *Flute Concerto*, Bax *Tintagel*, Walton *Partita*, Elgar *'Enigma' Variations*. Sinfonia of London/John Wilson
**9.15-10.30pm TBC**
**10.30-12 Radio 1** Relax at the Proms
**12am-1am Freeness**

## 17 SUNDAY

**7-9am Breakfast**
**9am-12 noon Sunday Morning**
**12 noon-1pm Private Passions** Christopher de Bellaigue
**1-2pm Lunchtime Concert** (rpt)
**2-3pm The Early Music Show**
**3-4.30pm Choral Evensong**
**4.30-5.30pm Jazz Record Requests**
**5.30-6.45pm Words and Music**
**6.45-7.30pm TBC**
**7.30-10pm Prom 4**. Cynthia Erivo pays homage to Nina Simone, Shirley Bassey, Billie Holiday and Gladys Knight. With BBC Concert Orchestra/Edwin Outwater
**10-11pm Record Review Extra**
**11pm-12am Sunday Night Series**
**12-12.30am Classical Fix**

## 18 MONDAY

**6.30-9am Breakfast**
**9am-12 noon Essential Classics**
**12 noon-1pm COTW** Ravel
**1-2pm Proms at Belfast** Hebrides Ensemble
**2-4.30 Afternoon Concert** (Prom 1 rpt)
**4.30-5pm New Generation Artists**
**5-7pm In Tune**
**7-7.30pm In Tune** Mixtape
**7.30-10pm Prom 5**. JS Bach *Musical Offering*, arr. Webern, Cassandra Miller *Viola Concerto*, Bruckner *Symphony No. 6*. Lawrence Power (viola), BBC Philharmonic/Omer Meir Wellber
**10-10.45pm Arts Feature** (Sunday Feature rpt)
**10.45-11pm The Essay**
**11pm-12.30am Night Tracks**

## 19 TUESDAY

**6.30am-1pm As Mon 18 July**
**1-2pm Lunchtime Concert**
**2-5pm Afternoon Concert** (Prom 2 rpt)
**5-7pm In Tune**
**7-9.15pm Prom 6**. Vaughan Williams *Symphony No. 4*, Tippett *Symphony No. 4*. BBC Philharmonic/Omer Meir Wellber
**9.15-10pm Arts Feature**
**10-10.15pm The Essay**
**10.15-11.30pm Prom 7**. Purcell *Dido and Aeneas*. Soloists (see p36 for details); La Nuova Musica/David Bates
**11.30pm-12.30am Night Tracks**

## 20 WEDNESDAY

**6.30am-1pm As Mon 18 July**
**1-2pm Lunchtime Concert**
**2-4pm Afternoon Concert** (Prom 6 rpt)

Watch the Verdi: Masabane Cecilia Rangwanasha sings in the Requiem

# TV HIGHLIGHTS
## The Proms

### First Night of the Proms
Sakari Oramo and the BBC Symphony Orchestra tackle Verdi's mighty Requiem with a line-up of rising star soloists, including Freddie de Tommaso and Masabane Cecilia Rangwanasha in what promises to be a spectacular start to the season.
*BBC Two: 15 July, 7.15pm*

### Prom 16: Sea Sketches – Andrew Manze and BBC National Orchestra of Wales
In an ode to maritime majesty, the BBC NOW and a double chorus are joined by Elizabeth Llewellyn and Andrew Foster-Williams for Vaughan Williams's *A Sea Symphony* to mark his 150th anniversary year, alongside two other vivid seascapes by his pupils Grace Williams and Doreen Carwithen.
*BBC Four: 29 July, time TBC*

### Prom 19: Puccini's *Il tabarro*
Mark Elder conducts the Hallé Orchestra in a concert performance of Puccini's single-act tragedy, with Natalya Romaniw, George Gagnidze and Ivan Gyngazov in the lead roles.
*BBC Four: 31 July, time TBC*

**4-5pm Choral Evensong**
**5-7pm In Tune**
**7-7.30pm In Tune** Mixtape
**7.30-10pm Prom 8**. Rachmaninov *Piano Concerto No. 2*, plus works by Jóhannsson, Guðnadóttir and Tchaikovsky (see p36 for details). Alexander Gavrylyuk (piano), BBC Singers, BBC SO/Dalia Stasevska
**10-10.45pm Arts Feature**
**10.45-11pm The Essay**
**11pm-12.30am Night Tracks**

## 21 THURSDAY
**6.30am-1pm As Mon 18 July**
**1-2pm Lunchtime Concert**
**2-5pm Afternoon Concert** (Prom 5 rpt)
**5-7pm In Tune**
**7-10pm Prom 9**. Beamish *Hive*, Ravel *Shéhérazade*, Rimsky-Korsakov *Scheherazade*. BBC NOW/Ariane Matiakh
**10-10.45pm Arts Feature**
**10.45-11pm The Essay**
**11-11.30pm The Night Tracks Mix**
**11.30pm-12.30am Unclassified** with Elizabeth Alker

## 22 FRIDAY
**6.30am-1pm As Mon 18 July**
**1-2pm Lunchtime Concert**
**2-5pm Afternoon Concert** (Prom 8 rpt)
**5-7pm In Tune**
**7-7.30pm In Tune** Mixtape
**7.30-10pm Prom 10**. Music for Royal Occasions by Britten, Elgar, Handel, Cheryl Frances-Hoad, Parry, Vaughan Williams, Walton, J Weir. BBC Singers, BBC Concert Orchestra/Bramwell Tovey
**10-10.45pm Arts Feature**
**10.45-11pm The Essay**
**11pm-1am Late Junction**

## 23 SATURDAY
**7-9am Breakfast**
**9-11.45am Record Review**
**11.45am-12.30pm New Generation Artists**
**12.30-1pm This Classical Life**
**1-3pm Inside Music**
**3-4pm Prom 12**. CBeebies Prom: *A Journey into the Ocean*. Southbank Sinfonia/Kwamé Ryan
**4-5pm Music Planet**
**5-6.30pm J to Z**
**6.30-7.30pm TBC**
**7.30-10pm Proms at Sage Gateshead**. John Adams *Shaker Loops*, Dvořák *Symphony No. 9*, etc. Royal Northern Sinfonia/Dinis Sousa
**10pm-12am New Music Show**
**12am-1am Freeness**

## 24 SUNDAY
**7-9am Breakfast**
**9am-12 noon Sunday Morning**
**12 noon-1pm Private Passions** Hayley Mills
**1-2pm Proms at Belfast** – Hebrides Ensemble (rpt)
**2-3pm The Early Music Show**
**3-4pm Choral Evensong**
**4-5pm Jazz Record Requests**
**5-6.15pm Words and Music**
**6.15-11pm Prom 13**. Smyth *The Wreckers* (see p37 for details).
**11pm-12am Sunday Night Series**
**12-12.30am Classical Fix**

## 25 MONDAY
**6.30-9am Breakfast**
**9am-12 noon Essential Classics**
**12 noon-1pm COTW** Beethoven
**1-2pm Proms at Truro**
**2-5pm Afternoon Concert** (Prom 9 rpt)
**5-7.30pm In Tune** plus Mixtape
**7.30-10pm Prom 14**. Glinka *Ruslan and Lyudmila overture*, Ethel Smyth *Concerto for Violin and Horn*, Rachmaninov *Symphony No. 2*. Elena Urioste (violin), Ben Goldscheider (horn), CBSO/Kazuki Yamada
**10-10.45pm Arts Feature**
**10.45-11pm The Essay**
**11pm-12.30am Night Tracks**

## 26 TUESDAY
**6.30am-1pm As Mon 25 July**
**1-2pm Lunchtime Concert**
**2-5pm Afternoon Concert** (Prom 10 rpt)
**5-7pm In Tune**
**7-7.30pm In Tune** Mixtape
**7.30-10pm Prom 15**. Barber *Violin Concerto*, Tchaikovsky *Symphony No. 4*, plus works by Bernstein and George Walker. Johan Dalene (violin), BBC SO/Jordan de Souza
**10pm-12.30am As Mon 25 July**

## 27 WEDNESDAY
**6.30am-1pm As Mon 25 July**
**1-2pm Lunchtime Concert**
**2-4pm Afternoon Concert** (Prom 7 rpt)
**4-5pm Choral Evensong**
**5-7pm In Tune**
**7-10pm Prom 16**. Vaughan Williams *A Sea Symphony*; plus works by Doreen Carwithen and Grace Williams. Soloists (see p37 for details), BBC Symphony Chorus, BBC National Chorus of Wales, BBC NOW/Andrew Manze
**10pm-12.30am As Mon 25 July**

## 28 THURSDAY
**6.30am-1pm As Mon 25 July**
**1-2pm Lunchtime Concert**
**2-5pm Afternoon Concert** (Proms at Sage Gateshead rpt)
**5-7pm In Tune**
**7-7.30pm In Tune** Mixtape
**7.30-10pm Prom 17**. J Walshe *The Site of an Investigation*. Brahms *A German Requiem*. Soloists (see p37 for details), National Youth Choir of Great Britain, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra/Ilan Volkov
**10pm-12.30am As Thu 21 July**

## 29 FRIDAY
**6.30am-1pm As Mon 25 July**
**1-2pm Lunchtime Concert**
**2-5pm Afternoon Concert** (Prom 14 rpt)
**5-7pm In Tune**
**7-7.30pm In Tune** Mixtape
**7.30-10pm Prom 18**. Shostakovich *Symphony No. 5*, plus works by Lizée and Bruckner. Colin Currie (percussion), BBC Scottish SO/Alpesh Chauhan
**10-10.45pm Arts Feature**
**10.45-11pm The Essay**
**11pm-1am Late Junction**

## 30 SATURDAY
**7-9am Breakfast**
**9-11.45am Record Review**
**11.45am-12.30pm New Generation Artists**
**12.30-1pm This Classical Life**
**1-3pm Inside Music**
**3-4pm Sound of Cinema**
**4-5.15pm Proms at Battersea** BBC Young Composer
BBC RADIO 3 **CHOICE 5.15-6.15pm WOMAD**
**6.15-7.30pm J to Z**
**7.30-10pm Prom 19**. Dukas *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, Respighi *Fountains of Rome*, Puccini *Il tabarro*. Soloists (see p37 for details). RCM Opera Chorus, Hallé/Mark Elder
**10pm-12am New Music Show**
**12am-1am Freeness**

## 31 SUNDAY
**7-9am Breakfast**
**9-10.30am Sunday Morning**
BBC RADIO 3 **CHOICE 10.30-1pm Prom 19a**. Brahms *Symphony No. 4*, plus works by Beethoven, Chopin and Silvestrov. Liudmyla Monastyrska (soprano), Anna Fedorova (piano), Ukrainian Freedom Orchestra/Keri-Lynn Wilson
**1-2pm Proms at Truro** (rpt)
**2-3pm The Early Music Show**
**3-4.30pm Choral Evensong**
**4.30-5.30pm Jazz Record Requests**
**5.30-6.45pm Words and Music**
**6.45-7.30pm TBC**
**7.30-10pm Prom 20**. Xenakis *Jonchaies*, Ravel *Piano Concerto*, Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*. Tom Borrow (piano), BBC Symphony Orchestra/Martyn Brabbins
**10-11.30pm Record Review Extra**
**11.30pm-12am Slow Radio** The Cricket Match
**12-12.30am Classical Fix**

QUIZ ANSWERS from p104
1. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
2. Henrik Ibsen
3. Fauré's Requiem in D minor
4. 36
5. A Sousaphone
6. Herbert Howells
7. Giacomo Puccini – his collection included Italy's first ever specially designed off-road vehicle
8. She became the first ever winner of the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition
9. a) Mia Farrow; b) Jaen Bohf; c) Joanna Lumley
10. They are all (or were) qualified to fly a plane

VISIT **WWW.CLASSICAL-MUSIC.COM** FOR THE VERY LATEST FROM THE MUSIC WORLD

GETTY, ROBIN CLEWLEY, ANDY GOTTS

www.classical-music.com

## The BBC Music Magazine newsletter

### Stay up to date!

Sign up for the weekly *BBC Music Magazine* newsletter, which is delivered to you direct via email every Tuesday. Each week, we give you the latest classical music news, a free download of a new recording, reviews of great new album releases, exclusive features from the *BBC Music Magazine* team – and much more!

# THE QUIZ

*It's time to put your classical music knowledge to the test...*

**1.** Whose Piano Sonata No. 11 in A major is rounded off by a well-known rondo 'Alla turca'?

**2.** Who wrote the play *Peer Gynt* for which Grieg composed his incidental music in 1875?

**3.** An early version of which famous work was first heard in public at the funeral of architect Joseph Lesoufaché in La Madeleine, Paris on 16 January 1888?

**4.** On a standard piano keyboard, how many of the keys are black?

**5.** Invented in c1893, what is the instrument pictured above?

**6.** Familiar as the setting of 'All My Hope on God is Founded' which composer's 1936 hymn tune 'Michael' is named after his son, who died aged nine the previous year?

**7.** Which composer's purchases of – often very expensive and exclusive – cars began with a De Dion-Bouton in 1901 and finished with a Lancia Lambda in 1924?

**8.** Why did 22-year-old Finnish soprano Karita Mattila hit the headlines in 1983?

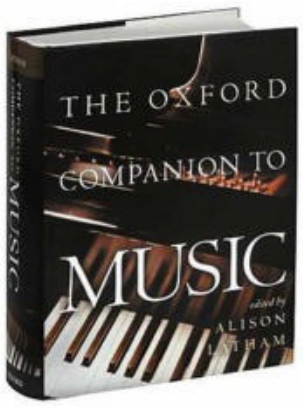
**9.** Name the famous actresses who were/are married to the following conductors: a) André Previn; b) Carl Davis; c) Stephen Barlow.

**10.** Aside from being conductors, what notable skill links Herbert von Karajan, Peter Phillips and Daniel Harding?

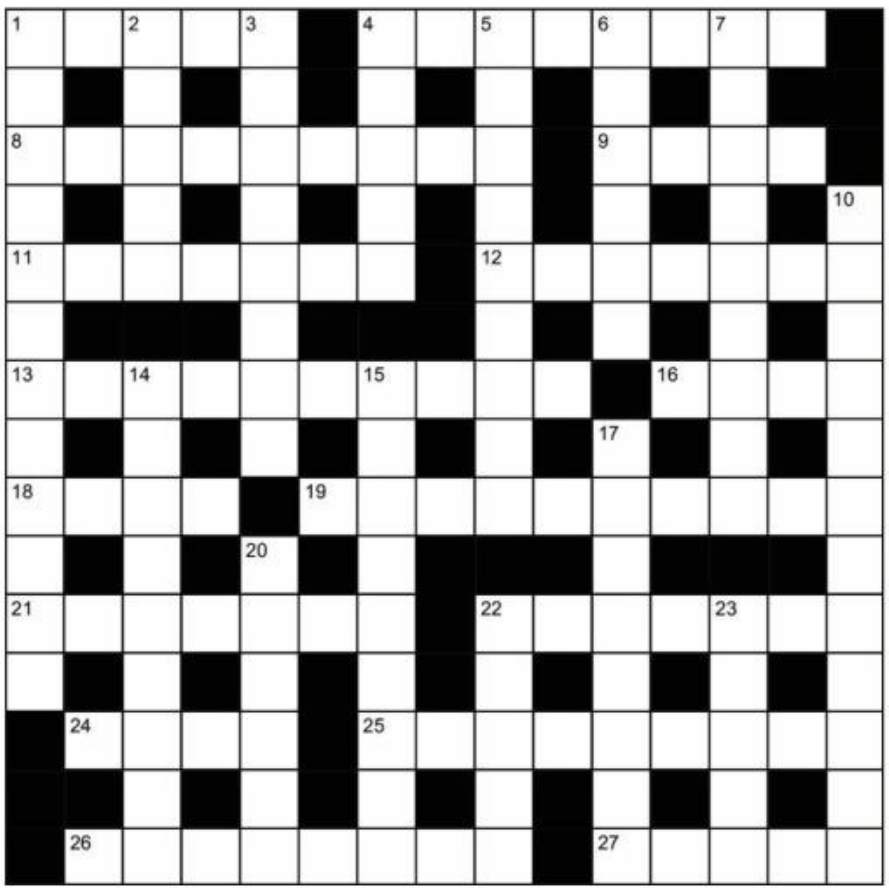
*See p102 for answers*

# The *BBC Music Magazine* PRIZE CROSSWORD NO. 374

Crossword set by **Paul Henderson**




The first correct solution of our crossword picked at random will win a copy of **The Oxford Companion to Music.** A runner-up will win **Who Knew? Answers to Questions about Classical Music** (see oup.co.uk). Send answers to: *BBC Music Magazine*, Crossword 374/July 2022, PO Box 501, Leicester, LE94 0AA to arrive by 12 July 2022 (solution in Oct 2022 issue).



**ACROSS**

1 Scottish dance is an illicit affair (5)
4 *Allegretto ma non troppo*? Chance engaging in error (8)
8 Unexpectedly needing to secure a *forte* – or quadruple *forte*? (9)
9 Songs: duets without piano (4)
11 Ukrainian composer, student, one Sky broadcast (7)
12 Cited a finally revolutionary Beethoven overture (4,3)
13 Ukrainian composer worked hard, mostly in pursuit of a lot of money? (10)
16 Down a semitone? Not interesting (4)
18 Bars in new symphony's opening (4)
19 Man less bothered about young fellow in Haydn choral work (6,4)
21 Music minus one? Mozart piece OK in developing area (7)
22 Plonk down thoughtlessly around piano and hit the wrong note? (7)
24 Not playing some horrid leggiero (4)
25 Choral works or American chamber pieces with zero content (9)
26 Composer lost his grip around end of overture (8)
27 Non-*legato* piano I used in one of the blues? (5)

**DOWN**

1 Violin accessories? Rubbish! (12)
2 First option in performing aids, possibly? (Increasingly so) (5)
3 Island melody finally sung 'ere, excitedly (8)
4 Critical audience comment about Italian composer-librettist (5)
5 Clever end for Amati, using one for repair (9)
6 Poor performer in Koechlin initially then beginning to maul a Debussy piece (6)
7 Jazz great appearing with violin for Italian composer (9)
10 Ukrainian composer, curiously talky and nosy, inwardly timid (12)
14 Scotsman's long journey to take in good English tenor (9)
15 Article some repurposed no good as signature tune (5,4)
17 30s jazz group stays on the rise after writing material (8)
20 Soloist finally just in front, perhaps to improve sound quality (4,2)
22 Frozen opera heroine seen around a generally warm place (5)
23 Overture from Italy in the ear – Boccherini, ultimately, or Cherubini? (5)

Your name & address .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**APRIL SOLUTION**
***No. 371***

**APRIL WINNER**
***Kathleen Rowberry, Leicester***

Immediate Media Company Limited, publisher of *BBC Music Magazine*, may contact you with details of our products and/or to undertake research. Please write 'Do Not Contact' if you prefer not to receive such information by post or phone. Please write your email address on your postcard if you prefer to receive such information by e-mail.

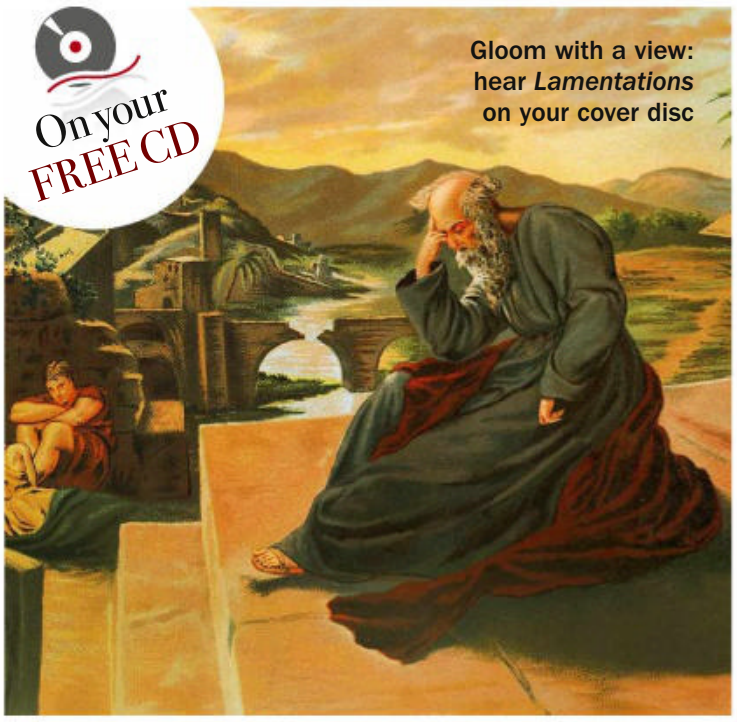
We abide by IPSO's rules and regulations. To give feedback about our magazines, please email editorialcomplaints@immediate.co.uk, visit immediate.co.uk, or write to the editor at the address above (opposite, top right)

Please note: Because of *BBC Music Magazine*'s limited office access during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, there may be a delay in receiving your prize. We apologise for any inconvenience caused.

**NEXT MONTH** on sale from 12 July (UK)

# Leif Ove Andsnes

As the acclaimed Norwegian pianist plunges headlong into the music of Mozart, he tells *Michael Church* about the many pleasures that lie in store




HELGE HANSEN, GETTY

## Lamentations
## Choral works

Peter Phillips conducts the BBC Singers in music by Tallis, Phinot, Nico Muhly, Brumel, White and Matthew Martin

**PLUS!** Conductor ***Semyon Bychkov*** shares the glories of Mahler with *Clive Paget*; the finest ***symphonies by female composers*** are explored by *Rebecca Franks*; commentator Eleanor Oldroyd and composer Roxanna Panufnik discuss a new ***cricket-themed opera***; and *Ivan Hewett* discusses the unique genius of the late ***Harrison Birtwistle***

Competition terms and conditions Winners will be the senders of the first correct entries drawn at random. All entrants are deemed to have accepted the rules (see opposite) and agreed to be bound by them. The prizes shall be as stated and no cash alternatives will be offered. Competitions are open to UK residents only, except employees of Our Media Company Limited, the promoter and their agents. No purchase necessary. Only one entry per competition per person. Proof of postage is not proof of entry. Our Media Company Limited accepts no responsibility for entries lost or damaged in the post. Entrants agree to take part in any publicity related to these competitions. The judge's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Entrants' personal details will not be used by Our Media Company Limited, publisher of *BBC Music Magazine*, for any other purpose than for contacting competition winners.

ourmedia
AN IMMEDIATE GROUP COMPANY

Volume 30 No. 10 *BBC Music Magazine* (ISSN 0966-7180) (USPS 018-168) is published 13 times a year by Our Media Ltd (An Immediate Group Company) under licence from BBC Worldwide, Eagle House, Bristol BS1 4ST, UK.
© Our Media Ltd, 2022
Printed by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 3XT. Not for resale. All rights reserved. Unauthorised reproduction in whole or part is prohibited without written permission. Every effort has been made to secure permission for copyright material. In the event of any material being used inadvertently, or where it proved impossible to trace the copyright owner, acknowledgement will be made in a future issue. MSS, photographs and artwork are accepted on the basis that *BBC Music Magazine* and its agents do not accept liability for loss or damage to same. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the publisher. ISSN 0966-7180. GST Registration No. 898993548RT

Distributed in the US by Circulation Specialists, Inc., 2 Corporate Drive, Suite 945, Shelton CT 06484-6238. Periodicals postage paid at Shelton, CT and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BBC MUSIC, PO Box 37495, Boone, IA 50037-0495.

Our Media Company Ltd is working to ensure that all of its paper is sourced from well-managed forests.
This magazine can be recycled, for use in newspapers and packaging. Please remove any gifts, samples or wrapping and dispose of it at your local collection point.

recycle
When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

## Subscriptions and back numbers. Faulty CDs

**Online subscriptions**
**classical-music.com**
Subscription prices for one year (13 issues):
UK £77.87 Europe/Eire £82.99 US $99
Canada $131.40 Rest of World £84.99

**UK, Europe, Rest of World**
*BBC Music Magazine*, 3 Queensbridge, Northampton, NN4 7BF, UK
**Orders/enquiries/back issues**
Tel: **03330 162 119**
Tel (Europe): **+44 1604 973 721**
Web: **buysubscriptions.com/contactus**

**US/Canada, Online subscriptions**
**Orders/enquiries/back issues**
*BBC Music Magazine*, PO Box 37495, Boone, IA 50037-0495
Toll-free order line: **1-866-461-4730**
Web: **buysubscriptions.com/contactus**

**South Africa**
BBC Music Service, Jacklin Enterprises, Private Bag 6, CENTURION, 0046
For sales prices:
Tel (+27) 011 265 4303;
Fax (+27) 011 314 2984;
Web: **buysubscriptions.com/contactus**

abc Jan-Dec 2020 – 25,734

# Neil Brand

## Composer, pianist, writer, broadcaster

**The marriage of stories and music is at the heart of almost everything Neil Brand does. His popular series on BBC Four allow him to share his passion for musicals and film music, while audiences around the world enjoy his live-to-picture piano performances and original silent film scores. He appears at the East Neuk Festival on 29 and 30 June.**

We didn't have a record player until I was in my teens, but we did have a piano. I had this extraordinary gift of playing by ear, and I got up to Grade 5, but gave up formal lessons when I was about 16. **RICK WAKEMAN** was someone I vaguely knew about; I wasn't interested in his band Yes, but he produced this extraordinary album *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, and it was absolutely picture-painting music. It was an eye-opener, because piano lessons had slightly stultified me about music. A love of music didn't come my way until after I left school; I asked my school music teacher if he would teach me for two years after I left university – he got me through my Grade 6 and my O-Level Music. It was a weird start to a musical career, but Rick Wakeman at least taught me that there were no boundaries and that you could be a rock star playing in a classical style.

I didn't really understand jazz and it hadn't occurred to me that jazz piano could be fireworks. **OSCAR PETERSON** had a very successful series on BBC Two during the mid-1970s and his playing was astounding; I can remember those great, fat fingers on the keyboard producing such speed. I understood from that not just how intricate great jazz piano could be, but also how jazz could take a familiar tune and rework it. You'd watch the harmony of the left hand disappear into far-off reaches, while the right hand was giving you the melody and all the fireworks going off around it. It was another eye-opener for me, that there didn't just have to be one way of doing a tune; there didn't even have to be one way, necessarily, of doing a scale.

NOELLE VAUGHN

### The choices

**Rick Wakeman**
**The Six Wives of Henry VIII**
*A&M Records AMLH 64361*

**Oscar Peterson**
**Oscar Peterson Invites...**
*BBC Two (1977)*

**Rózsa**
**Double Indemnity**
*Koch Records 3-7375-2-H*

**Mahler Symphony No. 1, 'Titan'**
Chicago Symphony Orchestra/Georg Solti
*Decca 411 7312*

**John Adams Nixon in China**
The Metropolitan Opera/John Adams
*Nonesuch DVD 7559-79608-8*

Film music didn't really start grabbing me until I was at college, and *Double Indemnity* came out of left field. The music didn't hit me until later, when I listened properly and heard what **MIKLÓS RÓZSA** did. By that time I must have seen a fair bit of *film noir*, but it hadn't occurred to me that virtually one man was responsible for that sound. It's dark, with a lush Romanticism, and yet, most of the time, most of the chords are minor, most of the tunes are minor and most of the feeling is that of threat. *Film noir* is about the grey areas of human behaviour; it's not black or white, nobody is all good, nobody is all bad, just like in real life. So Rózsa felt like grown-up music to me; music that didn't talk down, music that said 'you know what this feels like, you know what this means.'

I remember exactly the day that I heard **MAHLER**'s First Symphony on the radio. I lucked out by buying the Georg Solti recording and I remember putting it on and thinking I didn't have the volume up enough, so I turned it up a bit and I felt the shiver down my spine as I heard these vast harmonics that I'd never heard before. I was taken on these incredible journeys, with humour, pain and deep insight. It was the only way I could have come across Mahler; if I'd stuck with a proper musical training, all of this would have been poured over me at a much younger age. As it was, I had to stumble into it. And I played it and played it and played it.

When I first started out as a professional musician I had massive imposter syndrome, because I didn't have the proper chops. There were times when I thought it was ridiculous that I didn't know enough about it. And one day I thought '**JOHN ADAMS**, let's have a look!' I think I have always had problems with opera and the formality of it; the structure of it feels like the bars of a cage that I'm standing outside. I'm sure there's wonderful stuff going on inside, but I couldn't get in... until *Nixon in China*. I just sat there spellbound. There was this incredible operatic music, and it did for me what *Don Giovanni* appears to do for everybody else, which was to just hit me round the head with the most solidly musically created story. And at the end of it I didn't want it to finish.

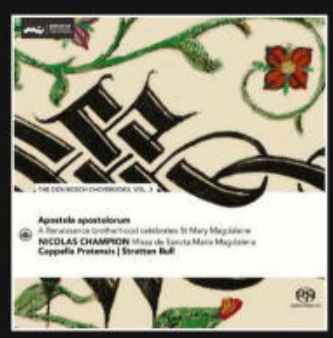
*Interview by Michael Beek*

# Challenge Classics

CC 72914

**Krishna Nagaraja**
Tales from Norway
**Krishna Nagaraja**
*Hardanger fiddle*
**Meta 4**

Magnified by an outstanding performance from Meta4, Nagaraja's music is inspired by Norwegian traditions, advocating a language that is more and more free from genre-related labelling. His music is neither folk nor classical, it is simply 'contemporary' in the literal sense of the word.




CC 72879

**Nicolas Champion**
Apostola apostolorum -
The Den Bosch Choirbooks vol. 3
**Cappella Pratensis**
**Stratton Bull**

The third volume in the on-going series devoted to the Den Bosch Choirbook. The previous volume was a Gramophone Editor's Choice: "This recording might change how you hear and think about Renaissance polyphony... This is the second instalment of a series exploring a set of early 16th-century choirbooks made for (and still housed in) 's-Hertogenbosch. The first appeared five years ago and has just been reissued, but this new impetus presages something rather special."

# CAvi-Music

AVI 8553042

**Olivier Messiaen**
Quatuor pour la fin du temps
**Amatis Trio & Ib Hausmann**

Aachener Zeitung: "... in general this new performance is convincing due to the sophisticated sensitivity of all four musicians, to which the violinist Lea Hausmann makes a significant contribution. One of the most important chamber music releases of recent times."

AVI 8553233

**Johann Sebastian Bach**
The Well-Tempered Clavier II
**Luca Guglielmi**
*Silbermann fortepiano, 1749*

For this recording of Vol. II, Guglielmi has selected a copy of the fortepiano built by Gottfried Silbermann in 1749. In recent years a clearer picture has emerged of Bach's instrumentarium, and one can infer that in the last ten years of his life he had a Silbermann fortepiano at his disposal. Sueddeutsche Zeitung on vol.1: " ... the listener quickly becomes addicted to Guglielmi and completely forgets that there is other music and other life as well... nobody can imagine a more beautiful sound prison."

# Perfect Noise

PN 2201

**Georg Philipp Telemann**
Telemann Intimissimo
(Sonatas, Fantasias and Concertos)
**Christian Heim,** *recorder and viola da gamba*
**Avinoam Shalev,** *harpischord*

Christian Heim (recorder and viola da gamba) and Avinoam Shalev (harpsichord) invite you to follow Georg Philipp Telemann's road to fame via an exclusive tour of his „workshop" – unpredictable and adventurous.

PN 2202

**Laila Salome Fischer,** mezzo soprano
Talking about Barbara
(music by Barbara Strozzi, Claudio Monteverdi, Giulio Caccini, Cipriano de Rore)
**Magnus Mehl,** *saxophone*
**Il Giratempo**

An Opera Singer, a jazz saxophonist, a baroque ensemble ... and one of the most fascinating women in the history of music.

# The Lost Recordings

TLR 2203040

**Henryk Szeryng,** *violin*
The Unreleased Berlin Studio Recordings
(Beethoven: Sonatas nos. 5 & 7; Franck: Sonata; Bach: Partita no.2; Ravel: Tzigane)
**Günther Ludwig & Marinus Flipse,** *piano*

The first release on any format of Szeryng's landmark recordings from Berlin during the years 1962-1963, at which time Szeryng was at the peak of his technical and intellectual capacities. All tracks have been remastered from the original Berlin radio tapes using Phoenix Mastering ™: never before, at any time, has the sound of a violin been restored to us with so much detail and authenticity.

TLR 2103039

**Claudio Arrau,** *piano*
The Unreleased Beethoven Recital, 1959
Sonatas op. 57, 81a, 110

"In his middle-age studio recordings, we experienced Arrau more as a rigid, rarely spontaneous master of the form. But in the concert hall, he still delivered risky, flaming interpretations, which this recital captures! One can marvel again – at both Arrau and at Beethoven...."

ORCHID CLASSICS

OUT NOW

# Jae-Hyuck Cho plays Chopin

Jae-Hyuck Cho plays Chopin's extraordinary four Ballades and Sonata No.3 in recordings that stand out for their nuance, passion, and virtuosity.

ORC100193

Available on all platforms and at www.orchidclassics.com